Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe

Intersections

Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture

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Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe

Edited by

Wietse de Boer and Christine Göttler



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INTRODUCTION: THE SACRED AND THE SENSES IN AN AGE OF REFORM

Wietse de Boer and Christine Göttler

The notion of the sacred has been fundamental to the development of comparative religion as a distinct field of study. The numinous, as Rudolf Otto analyzed it in *Das Heilige* (1917), was an autonomous sphere of the human experience and, as such, the essential common denominator of all religion. Criticizing rationalist theologies of his day as too narrow, Otto was open to anthropological studies that included 'primitive' religions within their purview, but he was equally adamant in rejecting approaches he deemed reductionist, be they psychological or sociological. The numinous, then, was an experience *sui generis* directed at an object external to the self; non-rational, it was an affective state provoked by a *mysterium tremendum*.¹

One may or may not accept Otto's axiom of irreducibility – clearly, since his day, the charge of reductionism has been a regular companion of the anthropological, sociological, psychological, and cultural-historical approaches that have enriched our understanding of religious phenomena. Regardless of one's position in this matter, however, Otto's analysis was both innovative and marred by a peculiar blind spot. On the one hand, he opened up for consideration the embodied nature of religious experience, and its 'awesome' affective powers. On the other hand, one can only be baffled (even when keeping in mind Otto's roots in Lutheran theology) by his assumption that the apprehension of the numinous bypassed ordinary sense experience and instead relied on something he was to call the 'sensus numinis'. Today, almost a century after Otto's seminal book

¹ Otto R., Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen (1917; consulted ed., 2nd ed. Breslau: 1918). A direct target of Otto's criticism was Wilhelm Wundt; more indirect ones included Freud, Weber, and Durkheim: see Raphael M., Rudolph Otto and the Concept of Holiness (Oxford: 1997) 44–45.

² He traced this concept back to Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700–1760): see Otto R., "Zinzendorf als Entdecker des Sensus Numinis", in idem, *Das Gefühl des Überweltlichen (Sensus numinis)* (Munich: 1932) 4–10. In contrast, he dismissed as endowed with 'a certain naïveté' ('fast naiv') William James's characterization of the religious experience as 'a *perception* of what we may call "something there", more deep and more general than any of the

appeared, there is no question but that this stance is untenable. Scholars have come to recognize that religious experience is overwhelmingly mediated by sensory discourses and practices. Accordingly, in recent years the study of religious phenomena has increasingly moved from established social-, cultural-, and religious-historical approaches to the analysis of the sensory – as well as affective – dimensions of religion.³

The early-modern European world is a privileged observatory for the study of these dimensions. The complex conglomerate of liturgical, pious, and spiritual practices we call late medieval Christianity was characterized by intense if often problematic forms of engagement with the material world. It was precisely this engagement that during the Reformation became subject to violent disputes over the relations between the secular

special and particular "senses" by which the current psychology supposes existent realities to be originally revealed' ('eine Vorstellung von etwas *objektiv* Existierendem [...], die tiefer und allgemeingültiger ist als irgend eine der einzelnen und besonderen Empfindungen, durch welche nach der Meinung der heutigen Psychologie die *Realität* bezeugt wird'). For Otto, James's empiricism did not permit 'the recognition of faculties of knowledge and potentialities of thought in the spirit itself' ('[die] Anerkennung von Erkenntnisanlagen und Ideengrundlagen im Geiste selber') that would allow an (in Otto's view) simpler explanation of the phenomenon. See Otto, *Das Heilige* 11, n. 1 (English trans.: idem, *The Idea of the Holy* [Harmondsworth: 1959] 24–25, n. 1; emphasis in original).

³ For introductions to the recent boom in studies on sensation, see Classen C., Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures (London – New York: 1993); Howes D. (ed.), Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader (Oxford – New York: 2005), as well as a series of readers entitled Sensory Formations published by Berg (Oxford – New York); Jütte R., A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace, trans. J. Lynn (orig. 2000; Cambridge – Malden, MA: 2005); Smith M.M., Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History (Berkeley – Los Angeles: 2007); also published as Sensory History (Oxford – New York: 2007); Meyer B. (ed.), Aesthetic Formations: Media, Religion and the Senses (New York: 2009); Gottang A. (ed.), Mit allen Sinnen: Sehen, Hören, Schmecken, Riechen und Fühlen in der Kunst (Leipzig: 2010); Bacci F. – Melcher D. (eds.), Art and the Senses (Oxford: 2011); Gavrilyuk P.S. – Coakley S. (eds.), The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Spirituality (Cambridge: 2011).

⁴ Relevant for the period considered in this volume are, among other titles, *I cinque sensi = The Five Senses*, a special issue of *Micrologus* 10 (2002); Cowan A. – Steward J. (eds.), *The City and the Senses: Urban Culture Since 1500* (Aldershot: 2007); Ferino-Pagden S., *I cinque sensi nell'arte*, exh. cat., Centro Culturale Santa Maria della Pietà, Cremona (Milan: 1996); Nichols S.G. – Kablitz A. – Calhoun A. (eds.), *Rethinking the Medieval Senses: Heritage, Fascinations, Frames* (Baltimore: 2008); Schleif C. – Newhauser R., *Pleasure and Danger in Perception: The Five Senses in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, a thematic issue of *Senses & Society* 5/1 (2010); Quiviger F., *The Sensory World of Italian Renaissance Art* (London: 2010); Sanger A. – Kulbrandstad Walker S.T. (eds.), *Sense and the Senses in Early Modern Art and Cultural Practice* (Farnham: 2012); Boer W. de, "The Counter-Reformation of the Senses", in Laven M. – Bamji A. – Janssen G. (eds.), *Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Farnham: forthcoming, 2012); Hall M.B. – Cooper T.E. (eds.), *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church* (Cambridge: forthcoming, 2013). Further references can be found in the bibliographies of contributions to this volume.

and the sacred, matter and 'spirit', body and soul, health and salvation.⁵ At the intersections between these spheres stood the five senses – the portals of the soul, the links between the inner and the outer worlds. It was impossible for them not to be crucially implicated in the Reformation conflict and its consequences. What was at stake were multifarious aspects of human experience and expression: speech and music, literary and visual representation, the organization and use of space, the appreciation of basic human wants and needs (food, drink, sex), the experiences of pleasure and pain, health and illness. The term 'sensuality' marked the territory as central to the human condition and, all at once, raised warning signs of moral danger above it.

The present volume offers the reader a number of forays into this territory. The project originated in two panels presented at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference (St. Louis, 2008) and was developed in seven more panels at the Renaissance Society of America conference (Venice, 2010). This book largely consists of a selection of these latter papers, duly revised and expanded. To a degree, they remain *pièces d'occasion*; and they certainly do not aim at a systematic overview of the subject. Nevertheless, they represent a common set of interests in, and approaches to, a burgeoning field of study. In their findings, too, we were pleased to detect multiple common themes, connections, and confirmations. The following pages are meant to highlight a few of these.

A preliminary word on method and scope may be in order. Most historical documentation has either left the sensory experiences of human subjects unspoken or expressed them in conventional, abstract terms, for instance in the codified language of courtly poetry or in the terms of Aristotelian or Platonic philosophical inquiry. In periods of profound cultural change, however, when habitual assumptions are suddenly questioned, they may rise to the surface of observable historical reality. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation era was such a time. In fact, the traditional uses of material objects and substances – and the sensory experiences associated with them – were at the heart of the Reformation contestation. To realize this, one need think only of the debates about the physical aspects of the Eucharist and other sacraments, images and relics, song

⁵ See now Bynum C.W., *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Late Medieval Christianity* (New York – Cambridge, MA: 2011). On the issue of 'spirit' as an ambiguous representation of the connections between the material and non-material worlds, see Göttler C. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture*, Intersections 9 (Leiden – Boston: 2009).

and music, and incense, oil, and water. Equally obvious, out of this contestation emerged far-reaching changes in the sensory environments of churches and other places of worship, and in the routine behaviours of the early modern faithful. All were affected to some extent by efforts to separate the sacred and the profane, to achieve a more proper or effective engagement with the divine, to reorder gender relations, and to discipline human conduct according to new ethical standards. The disciplined person – as a massive new conduct literature makes clear – was to reform her or his sensory relations with the world. What was at stake in this complex, and by no means unidirectional, transformation is often best understood by studying its manifestations up close. Instances of crisis, conflict, and change may provide ideal opportunities to explore the ways in which sensation was understood, experienced, repressed, channelled, or promoted. For this reason most authors of this volume have chosen a focused, microhistorical approach to the subject.

The contributions are organized around a number of interlocking themes and accordingly divided into six sections. We begin with the simple but fundamental notion of the senses as interface – or, to use premodern metaphors, as the doors, gates, or windows – between the subject and the world. As such, they could also open pathways to the divine. These pathways, their hierarchy, and their relationships to each other had been an issue of debate since the time of the early Church fathers. From the late Middle Ages onwards, movements of religious reform and renewal led to a reconsideration of the senses as channels for experiencing and communicating with the divine; shifts to more 'interior' and 'private' forms of religiosity went along with a growing interest in the workings of the inner senses. Vision, the subject of the first group of essays, had long been exalted as the noblest of the senses, but early-modern Catholic artists, in a resolute denial of Protestant criticisms of the religious image, explored new ways to increase its devotional potential. In the confused years of the early Reformation, for example, a virtuoso painter like Parmigianino contributed to the intense Christocentric devotions of his day with an intimate but foreboding depiction of the Virgin and Child – perhaps his most renowned painting. Through an innovative use of religious iconography and a subtle, layered form of representation (as Alfred Acres argues) he suggested intimations of the Passion, fostering an intimate form of meditation that made a 'studied investment in a conscious, gradual, and precious labour of seeing'. With the motif of a cross on the reflective surface of an urn held by the Virgin - a motif that is more suggested than clearly shown - Parmigianino both probed the threshold between visibil-

ity and invisibility, and referred to the distinctive artifice of his own pictorial style. In less ambiguous and more directed ways, mediated forms of viewing increasingly benefited from the technological revolution brought about by the printed image. Again the Christ figure was frequently central to the endeavour. While the Counter-Reformation was in full swing, the extraordinary representational power of image-relics like St. Veronica's veil and the Shroud of Turin could be, and was, replicated and multiplied through printed copies, and thus spread far and wide. As Andrew Casper suggests, this had enormous implications for the sensory aspects of the cult. It meant that relics formed by touch, and believed to contain physical traces as well as the imprint of Christ's body, allowed divine communication not only through their originals, but also at a remove. This raised (to vary Walter Benjamin's famous expression) the problem of the relic in an age of mechanical reproduction: what did it mean for the notion of representation (in its most literal sense) to view and even to touch a reproduction of Christ's body relics? What did it mean for his 'real presence'? Here, obviously, viewing and touching are far more than physical acts. They are intertwined with contemplative operations which in the devotional resurgence of the Counter-Reformation era became heavily theorized and systematized. Walter Melion focuses on the foremost image theorists of the age - the Jesuits - to dissect the connections between the act of viewing and the higher faculties of the soul. He does so through a painstaking exegesis of another celebrated set of print images, namely those accompanying Pedro de Ribadeneyra's Life of Blessed Father Ignatius of Loyola published by Theodoor Galle of Antwerp in 1610, showing the multiple ways in which their rich visual vocabulary turns the hagiographical text – itself the result of visual and auditory testimony – into a project of conversion. In Ribadeneyra's finely tuned descriptions (which themselves expand on Augustine's model of vision), Ignatius's spiritual growth and illumination is revealed and encouraged by a continuous flow of images circulating and mediating between his inner and outer senses and between the divinity and his soul. At the core of Melion's analysis is the question of how Galle and his team of Antwerp engravers transformed Ribadeneyra's complex distinctions of non-sensory and non-representational revelations and illuminations into a visual imagery of colourless rays, aureoles, and clouds.

Yet the realm of worship and meditation was a multisensory one: opening it up for exploration is one of the most innovative trends in current scholarship. Whereas the traditional privileging of sight had been questioned before, the late medieval and early modern era brought new attention to the 'lower' senses of taste, smell, and touch, and also to speech and

hearing. To these senses the second section of this volume is dedicated. Barbara Baert explores the issue of intersensory connections from the perspective of iconology and visual anthropology: her test case is the *Noli me tangere* scene and its complex interpretation in doctrinal and devotional texts. The analysis focuses on the garden as biblical setting of the encounter between the risen Christ and Mary Magdalene, but also as image and allegory of the Garden of Eden and the interior garden of the soul. The frequently abundant horticultural environment in visual representations of the scene may thus be linked to a broader artistic trend to create images appealing to senses other than vision.

In contrast, Rachel King's essay on amber shows the promise of studying a material substance for its sensory uses; and it moves the discussion firmly into Reformation territory. By the end of the Middle Ages, the widespread rosary devotions were intimately associated – one would assume largely subconsciously – with the tactile and even olfactory sensations of handling amber beads. The Reformation disrupted this ingrained experience, common to much of Europe, by turning amber into contested matter. Accordingly, its devotional applications waned in German Protestant lands and surged in Counter-Reformation Italy. Such applications thus became confessional markers, while alternative profane uses could be seen as evidence of a decline in piety. Yet this development was not without complexities. On the one hand, German amber exports to Italy continued unabated; on the other, in Italy and elsewhere, amber products were promoted as collectibles, fashion accessories, and perfumes.

On the other side of the confessional divide, speech and hearing were of course at the centre of Reformed theologies. Jennifer Rae McDermott focuses on the ear of the faithful as the channel through which earlymodern Anglican ministers delivered the Word of God. Her contribution expands the traditional model of a split between a Catholic visual and a Protestant vocal aesthetics to include contemporary medical and anatomical discourse. The broad dissemination of Bartolomeo Eustachio's discovery of the aural tube (1564) led to an almost obsessive awareness of the ear's vulnerability to poison attacks. In early modern England, this anatomical discovery further served to promote Protestant ideas about the superiority of the word – and especially the Word of God – over the image. Understood as a subtle fluid or divine spiritus, the Word of God was accorded the power to penetrate into the innermost recesses of the soul. Ministers were presented as physicians who, with their tongues, would unlock the worshippers' ears and infuse or 'impregnate' their souls with the divine word and thus protect them against evil forces.

Closely associated with such ideas about the senses as conduits of divine (or malignant) influences was an awareness of their role in the affective life. A third group of essays examines these connections between senses and affects. Like their Protestant counterparts, Catholic authors also turned to widespread medical or natural-philosophical knowledge; they did so, however, with the opposite purpose of confirming the power of material images over the bodies and souls of their viewers. Of the tripartite rhetorical function of an image - instructing, delighting, and affecting spectators' minds - the latter was given primary importance in post-Tridentine treatises on sacred art. Italian art critics particularly associated Flemish painting with the power to elicit the viewer's emotional response. As early as the mid-fifteenth century, the humanist Bartolomeo Fazio praised Rogier van der Weyden for his ability to represent sorrow and tears in depictions of the Passion. The widely shared view that Flemish artists excelled in the representation of grieving and weeping (holy) figures, and that their paintings, in turn, provoked 'devout persons to shed many tears' could also give rise to ironic or derogatory comments, as suggested by this often-cited phrase ascribed to Michelangelo by the Portuguese Francisco de Hollanda, himself the son of a Flemish artist.⁶

What are the implied connections between artistic style, gender, and emotional culture? This is a theme pursued in the essays by Jennifer R. Hammerschmidt and Sarah Joan Moran. They investigate the ways in which two major Netherlandish artists, both renowned for their art of portraiture, deployed artistic means to generate affective responses – and strengthen emotional ties – in specific communal or corporate settings. Hammerschmidt offers a fresh look at Rogier van der Weyden's Prado *Descent from the Cross* by studying its local agency and function within the context of the so-called *kermis-ommegang* or procession of Our Lady, held annually on the feast day of the Virgin of Sorrows. Rogier's unusual re-enactment of the *Descent from the Cross*, which also includes elements of the Deposition, was shaped by and responded to the scenes of the Passion performed by actors in several pageants of the procession. The indeterminacy of the depicted figures, in a space that recalls both a sculpted

⁶ The quotation reads: 'Flemish painting [...] will satisfy, generally [...] a devout person more than any painting from Italy, which will never cause him to shed a tear, whereas that of Flanders will cause him to shed many': Hollanda Francisco de, *Diálogos em Roma* (1538): Conversations on Art with Michelangelo Buonarroti, ed. G.D. Folliero-Metz (Heidelberg: 1998) 76–77. For an excellent analysis of this complex passage in a fictive dialogue between Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna, see Agoston L.C., "Male/Female, Italy/Flanders, Michelangelo/Vittoria Colonna", Renaissance Quarterly 58 (2005) 1175–1219.

shrine and the site of Christ's crucifixion, also links them to the striking images visualized in the inner space of the mind that, according to latemedieval tracts on meditation, furthered the process of remembering and experiencing the Passion events. Moran explores the Begijnhof, or Court Beguinage, in early-seventeenth-century Antwerp as a central component of the city's socio-religious fabric, closely connected as it was to members of the aristocratic and commercial elites. Central to the services provided by these female communities was praying for the souls in purgatory, a charitable practice and an investment that increased in value after the Council of Trent. In analysing Anthony van Dyck's Lamentation executed for the high altar of Antwerp's Beguine Church, Moran explores the personal relationships between the altarpiece's maker and its intended (female) viewers by considering their shared understanding of and reliance on Counter-Reformation techniques of meditation. These techniques, she argues, purposefully engaged the inner and outer senses to bring the devotee nearer to God. They shaped the religious mentality of both the artist and the Beguines, and thus informed the visual character of the work. Not only are they a crucial element to understand the Lamentation's meanings in its historical and spatial context, but they complicate traditional concepts of 'artists' and 'patrons'.

The tears powerfully evoked in late-medieval Netherlandish art also accompanied, in great abundance, the private and public prayers of an impressive number of saintly Catholics in the following centuries. Joseph Imorde argues that the considerable attention given to exorbitant weeping and wailing in post-Tridentine religious literature points to a shift in the understanding of the acquisition of spiritual knowledge. Motivated by an increased interest in the writings of the fathers of the Church, the 'inner sense of taste' (gustatum interius) or the 'palate of the heart' (palatum cordis), as St. Augustine calls it, was given equal or more importance than the inner sense of sight or the 'inner eyes' (oculi interiores), since the former alone was capable of tasting the sweetness of God's love. This spiritual-palatable delight expressed itself in tears, thus provoking a multisensory theatrical performance that in its turn had a powerful impact on the senses of the devout.

Studies such as these demonstrate considerable continuities between medieval and later forms of piety; they also appear to suggest a smooth alignment between sense applications and the affective tenor of lived devotional experiences. Yet tension, conflict, and disruption were of course defining features of early modern Christianity: they constitute a fourth theme in this volume. If the devotional engagement with the physical realm is intrinsically problematic, it was so particularly in this era of reform. Already in the fifteenth century, as is well known, a prophetic movement like Savonarola's embraced an asceticism that was instinctively anti-sensory. Klaus Pietschmann, in his contribution to this volume, goes farther to show how religious music became the subject of deep ideological controversy at the height of the Florentine Renaissance. Savonarola rejected sophisticated uses of polyphonic chant as a way to echo the heavenly choirs. The reason was that, in the hands of the Medici elite, musical commissions of such 'celestial soundscapes' were meant to suggest an ideal association with their own court and oligarchically ruled city. Savonarola protested this association on moral, political, and religious grounds. The sensual lures and worldly pretences it implied were absent from his own ideal city – a republic that aspired to reflect the true heavenly order through the asceticism of Gregorian plainchant. The case illustrates in a compelling fashion how sensory discourses and practices could have far-reaching political ramifications.

In his day Savonarola was clearly an outlier, but before long the tables were turned entirely. Within a generation we see conflicting views of paradise return, but this time in a different context and with a different outcome. The Paduan playwright Ruzante, in his Dialogo facetissimo, famously posited next to the ascetic heaven of those who had lived abstemious lives, the mellower paradise of those who enjoyed their just rewards for an earthly existence based on honesty and respect for the senses. Laura Giannetti positions Ruzante's voice amidst the era's complex debates about health, diet, and morals: it emerges as part of a long-term trend towards growing appreciation of taste. But it stood in a tense relationship with religious norms. For all his obvious ironies, Ruzante's purpose was a serious one: in a time of dearth and hunger, and perhaps influenced by heterodox utopias and criticisms of ecclesiastical law, he advocated for a better world based on a healthy appreciation of the body. Not surprisingly, this could not stand as the Counter-Reformation garnered steam. In a symbolic act, later censors cut Ruzante's alternative paradise from reprint editions of his *Dialogo*. The theological implications of the issue of sense experience are therefore obvious.

It is the merit of Matthew Milner's research to have demonstrated abundantly that discourses about sense perception were central to the Reformation conflict itself, as evidenced by the case of England. In the final analysis, not only idolatry but also heresy was the result of a disordered sensory apparatus. Theological dissidence was not just a matter of the mind but of the body; as a consequence, the defence of orthodoxy

included the need to control the senses. Significantly, Milner notes, the argument cut both ways: for all their differences, the discourse of sensory discipline was common to both reformers and traditionalists. Hence the insistent call to 'captivate one's senses' echoed across the religious and political spectrum, appealing to the individual, the confessional group, and society at large. And while the discourse grew out of late medieval piety (suggesting important continuities across the threshold of the Reformation), it further evolved as it incorporated humanist ideals of self-control and civility.

In sum, sensory discipline went well beyond individual morality, nor was it targeted merely at isolated issues such as dietary customs or musical enjoyment. In the early modern era the concern with the senses encompassed personal morality as well as community ethics, the private sphere along with the public. What was involved was the creation of sensory environments - our fifth theme. It is obvious that the world of art should be directly engaged in projects of this kind. Renaissance architects, engineers, visual artists, and masters of ceremony excelled in designing integrated urban spaces and staging compelling rituals, but sound, smell, and movement contributed as much to their sensory impact as the visual aspects. Nor was this impact limited to deliberate planning: life itself intruded with its own spectacles, sounds, smells, and tactile encounters. Thus Venice's Piazza San Marco, as Iain Fenlon shows, became a veritable 'theatre of the senses': it showcased both profane and religious rituals accompanied by elaborate visual, auditory, and other sensory productions. The Counter-Reformation not only expanded or added devotional and artistic elements, but did something more. In its rituals of cultic celebration or expiation, especially in the aftermath of a devastating plague, it transformed established notions of Venice as a Christian republic to turn the civic stage into an image of the City of God.

Such projections of ideal forms on the urban community, and the ideological and ritual programs that accompanied them, left a deep imprint on the sensory environments of early modern cities. In this vein seventeenth-century Naples, the proverbial 'paradise inhabited by devils', repeatedly dramatized the promise of the sensory fulfilment awaiting the blessed in the hereafter. To be sure, such imaginative endeavours were reserved for special occasions. But the Baroque celebrations of lights, sounds, smells, and (sometimes) tastes put on during selected feast days, as Wietse de Boer explains, show how these urban projects – at once ritual, theatrical, architectural, musical, artistic, and even gastronomical – presupposed a conception of communal space characterized by the way the senses

experienced it. The Theatine preacher Giovanni Battista Giustiniani conceived of heaven itself in the same sensory terms. In an echo of other imaginative paradises, such as the Florentine one analysed by Pietschmann, Giustiniani and other Neapolitans shaped theirs through competition and ideological difference. In the wake of the Masaniello Revolt (1648), in particular, they responded to political crisis as well as the hunger of the urban poor.

Elsewhere in Italy, too, churchmen, lay patrons, architects, and artists collaborated to create communal experiences of this kind. In the Sacro Monte of Varallo we have the opportunity to observe such a project in the isolation of Piedmont's Alpine slopes, far removed from a corrupt world. There, a New Jerusalem emerged as an ideal physical and artistic environment that would allow a pious, and fully sensory, engagement with the drama of the Passion. Yet throughout its long history the project was marked by disputes, tensions, and conflicts among the protagonists involved. Christine Göttler examines the renewed interest in the pilgrimage site from the 1560s onwards in light of contemporary discussions about the effect of material images upon the minds and senses of the faithful. Gaudenzio Ferrari fashioned his Calvary Chapel as a consummate work of religious art fostering sensual, intellectual, and spiritual knowledge and delight. Thus, drawing on his insights into the harmony and composition of the soul, he 'invented' the iconography of a soul in contemplation. Yet the more recent additions to the original program of the Passion, especially the Chapel of the Garden of Eden, were met with growing anxieties that the delightful interiors would lead the imagination of the pilgrims astray.

In this way novel forms of sense application raised complex aesthetic, moral, social, and psychological concerns. There were also obvious connections with the major cognitive and scientific innovations of the early modern period. Jennifer McDermott's essay, discussed above, provides a telling example of the influence of a new understanding of hearing on Anglican preaching. That the imaginative realm was itself in turmoil is also suggested by the way in which breakthrough discoveries and inventions were negotiated and accommodated within established spiritual traditions. Galileo's telescope, named in the course of one preacher's explorations of the heavenly wonders (discussed in De Boer's essay), has a significance that goes well beyond the cosmological sphere: as an optical instrument it is symbolic of the cognitive-empiricist shift associated with the scientific revolution. What are the implications of this shift for the realm of religion? Clearly it is past time to retire well-worn tropes about

the early modern conflict between science and religion, and investigate up-close the cultural transformations – whether subtle or clamorous – brought about by the era's renewal of natural philosophy. The study of changing notions of sense perception may be a critical way of revisiting the theme.

This volume's final section offers two examples of such an exploration of the connections between senses, science, and the supernatural. Already in the sixteenth century (and anticipating broader changes in the following century), medical thought about the causation of disease was in flux; and, as Yvonne Petry shows, reconsideration of the role of vision and touch played an instrumental role. In the French physician Jacques Grévin's ideas about poisons we may detect a medicalized Neoplatonic conception of vision as able to emit noxious or otherwise effective influences. Yet Grévin, motivated by Protestant criticisms of Catholic 'superstitions', raised questions about existing supernatural theories of contagion. He allowed that demonic powers were able to harness vision to this effect, and that God might protect humans against it, but in the natural world contagion required transmission through touch. A different assessment of the reach of the natural and supernatural spheres is documented in Sven Dupré's contribution. Yet here, too, the crucial importance of the senses is evident. Dupré offers a nuanced exploration of the response to Kepler's Optics (1604) written by two of the foremost Jesuit mathematicians, Franciscus Aguilonius and Christoph Scheiner. Their reintroduction or, rather, continuation of the theory of species was not motivated (Dupré argues) by a religious conservatism's distrust of innovation, but rather by a deep concern about the role of the inner and outer senses in the attainment of both natural and spiritual knowledge. It was the same concern, we note, that informed Galle's Life of Ignatius of Loyola studied by Melion. Regulated by species or subtle substances, according to a tradition originating in Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, sense perception served as an absolutely necessary tool in engaging the spiritual senses or the faculties of the soul.

In early modern culture, then, the involvement with the senses was far-reaching, and their intersections with the sacred were numerous and complex. As this volume shows, they concerned the ritual and performative, the physical and contemplative, the representational and symbolic, the spatial and imaginative, the doctrinal and cognitive, the medical and scientific, as well as the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of religion. Given this multiplicity, the book's organization is pragmatic: like these introductory pages, it is meant to suggest some common themes among the contributions, by no means to exhaust them. It is up to the reader to

discover further connections. The editors are bound to stress that these forays remain partial and preliminary. Yet two conclusions can be drawn. First, it is striking to note the degree to which early-modern religious theory and practice considered sensation as an interconnected, or even integrated, set of experiences. Second, that these experiences gave rise to profound differences and conflicts confirms their centrality as an issue – and hence an explanatory factor – in the religious crisis and transformation of the Reformation era. Thus, in presenting its findings, this volume extends at once an invitation for further research.

PART ONE

PATHWAYS TO THE DIVINE: VISION

INSINUATING THE CROSS: SIGHT, SUGGESTION, AND SELF IN RENAISSANCE PAINTING

Alfred Acres

Images are among the most precise and durable traces of human thought and action. Intention, time, material, and work converge in something to which any number of eyes, minds, and bodies have responded and will continue to respond. The responses will vary among viewers, and even for a single viewer over time. But the image itself, perched between deliberative making and fluid perception, remains stable. Artists have always explored ways in which the still image can carry something of the former to the latter – keeping, it would seem, elements of the generative thought process alive after its time. If this sounds obvious, suggesting simply that artists hope someone will grasp their aims, we should bear in mind how seldom our writing about art actually frames the encounter between what is meant and what is perceived.

That encounter can be unusually rich among Renaissance religious images, where intended meanings are often intimately shaped by the deepening self-consciousness and ambition of artists working in rapidly expanding, interconnected markets. A knowledgeable European patron or other observer ca. 1400 could scarcely have imagined not only the massively elaborated naturalism that would characterize work being produced ca. 1450, but also the ways in which so much of that work assertively distinguishes a maker's approach from those of others within the same market or in neighboring and foreign ones. It is clear to us that sophisticated signatures and inscriptions, self-portraits, unconventional compositions, and strenuously differentiated styles had emerged and would proliferate as reflections — and instruments — of new intellectual and professional stature. Less familiar, however, in modern accounts of the period are broad implications of this shift for the communication of religious meanings.

What did the surging value of artistic individuality and novelty mean for depicting tenets of faith that were to be understood as universal and timeless? One answer is a growing premium on subtlety. Few pathways of modern scholarship on Renaissance religious art have been more sustained and vital than those exploring layers of meaning in representation. To

this end the work of different generations, regions, and artists has invited scrutiny of different aspects of images, and the instincts of individual historians have further multiplied the vectors of attention. Whether seeking concepts meticulously seeded by something like 'disguised symbolism', ideological precepts of which the artist himself might have been only vaguely aware, or a more mediated dimension of meaning in between, a shared thread of inquiry has been the sustained search itself. The often considerable effort required to see something under the surface has come to seem integral, not obstructive, to the art and its aims. If this is as widely true as we have come to believe, one reason is sure to have been the innate value of such interpretive effort for two broad goals we recognize intersecting by the mid-fifteenth century: specific religious meaning and artistic performance. The special power of comprehension hard won, which lay at the heart of medieval devotion, exegesis, and, indeed, scripture itself (so often seen through a glass only darkly), was no less appreciated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. During the same generations, countless artists recognized a parallel in their own motivation to make images that demand time and thought to fathom.

We can trace the same parallel from an historical angle by gathering an array of works that articulate a similar core idea in diverse ways. All of the paintings to be discussed here embed or invoke the cross in the presence of the Christ Child to convey the thoroughly familiar yet nameless relationship between his incarnation and sacrifice. And all of them do so with studied investment in a conscious, gradual, and precious labour of seeing.

For most observers today, Parmigianino's *Madonna of the Long Neck* is all about style [Fig. 1]. The two meter-tall unfinished panel, commissioned by Elena Baiardo in 1534 for a chapel in the Servite church at Parma, is almost always presented as a set piece of Mannerism. The reasons are familiar: a mix of compositional and anatomical eccentricities that seemingly abandons the dynamic equilibrium of naturalism and idealism associated with the High Renaissance of the years preceding. We know, of course, that broad terms like 'Mannerism' and 'High Renaissance' project artificial coherence onto the open yield of the past. Yet those projections easily continue to limit thoughts about individual works that have become, as this one has, textbook examples of one thing or another. In this case the traditional title loads the deck, too. But there is no reason to think that Parmigianino or any of his contemporaries called the painting *Madonna*



Fig. 1. Parmigianino, Madonna of the Long Neck (ca. 1534–1540). Oil on panel, 216 \times 132 cm. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi. Image © Scala / Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali / Art Resource, NY.

dal Collo Lungo. The first recorded use of that name in connection with it appears to have been in the seventeenth century.¹

The earliest known mention of the work, unconstrained by the name, comes from Vasari, who noted it briefly in his first edition (1550) and added a few words in his second (1568):

For the Church of Santa Maria de' Servi, he painted a panel of Our Lady holding the Child asleep in her arms, with some angels at the side, one of whom has in his arms a crystal urn in which glitters the image of a cross, which Our Lady is contemplating. He left the work unfinished, since he was not very happy with it; none the less it is much praised, being in that style of his, full of grace and beauty.²

The extremely concise description focuses on an element rarely mentioned in general modern accounts: 'a crystal urn in which glitters the image of a cross' [Fig. 2]. Long almost invisible, the cross became more apparent after a recent cleaning of the panel. But it remains far from obvious; a casual observer in the Uffizi is unlikely to notice it. On the rejuvenated surface it has emerged as yellow or gold, and Vasari's use of the verb glitter, or shine (*riluce*) suggests that it might have been brighter around 1550. Still, the oblique location of the form between highlight and shadow on the urn makes it unlikely ever to have been conspicuous.³

His remark that Mary is 'contemplating' the cross is at best debatable. Her gaze is downward toward Christ.⁴ But the error is understandable, and not only because Vasari relied much more on memory than we do when

¹ In a letter of 1674, according to Cropper E., "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style", *Art Bulletin* 58 (1976) 376 n. 13. For the letter in question Cropper cites Davitt-Asmus U., "Zur Deutung von Parmigianino's *Madonna dal Collo Lungo*", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 31 (1968) 305 n. 10.

² Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, trans. G. Bull (London: 1987), vol. II, 195; idem, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, ed architettori*, ed. G. Milanesi (Florence: 1878–1885), vol. V, 231: 'Alla chiesa di Santa Maria de' Servi fece in una tavola la Nostra Donna col Figliuolo in braccio che dorme, e da un lato certi Angeli, uno de' quali ha in braccio un'urna di cristallo, dentro la quale riluce una croce contemplata della Nostra Donna; la quale opera, perché non se ne contentava molto, rimase imperfetta, ma nondimeno è cosa molto lodata in quella sua maniera piena di grazia e di bellezza'.

³ Ekserdjian, observing that the fact that rock crystal, a substance of almost magical rarity in the period, could never have been worked to make such an object is no obstacle to Vasari's identification, since it is evidently a celestial manufacture', concludes that it looks like a representation less of crystal than of silver. Ekserdjian D., *Parmigianino* (New Haven – London: 2006) 209–210.

⁴ John Shearman explains the discrepancy by suggesting that we are to see Mary as having just looked at the cross, and now turning toward Christ. Shearman J., *Only Connect: Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: 1992) 235–236.



Fig. 2. Detail of Figure 1: urn held by angel at left.

we write about these things. Anticipations of the Passion in Renaissance images of the infant Christ had often been figured in terms of sad fore-knowledge on Mary's part, and here the foreboding of the cross is amplified by his limp arm and apparent sleep. Such morbid body language for the Child had been widely explored in art of the generation preceding and is certainly pronounced enough here to signal the sacrifice alone.

Before pondering why the cross was included, it is worth considering how. What kind of form or image was this meant to be? There are a few reasonable possibilities. One might see it first, for example, as a physical presence, as if painted or gilded on the surface of the urn. Another look might suggest instead that it is a reflection there of another cross, presumably outside the picture. A third might deem it some sort of apparition rather than a decoration or reflection. If the cross is understood as something perceived by the Child himself, his sleep might argue for its status as

a vision, or even dream. Ute Davitt-Asmus read Vasari's *riluce* as evidence that the cross is a reflection –though rather than a direct reflection of an actual cross, instead a transforming reflection of the Child himself that responds to the proleptic splay of his arms.⁵ If this is what Parmigianino intended, he has devised a symbolic mechanism by which an optical phenomenon acquires interpretive or prophetic power: the future is reflected.⁶

There are ways to think further about how this shape was conceived within the scene, but a larger question prevails: why would an artist choose less to display than to insinuate the cross, or perhaps even hide it? Terms like 'insinuate' or 'hide' may give pause here. After all, the cross is there, it is in one respect foregrounded, and it merited remark in Vasari's twosentence description of the picture. But Parmigianino, a restless chemist of iconography as well as style, knew there were any number of ways to make this most consequential of things far more evident than he did in this large painting. He was aware, for example, of narrative encounters between the cross and Christ Child, often by the agency of a young John the Baptist – as, say, in Raphael's 1506 *Madonna del Prato* or any number of comparable scenes produced around the turn of the sixteenth century.⁷ Parmigianino seems, in fact, to have had this or kindred images in mind while developing the altarpiece, since a few of his many exploratory drawings audition the young John on this same side of the image. On one of the study sheets now in Paris, he kneels and looks outward as he points toward Christ with his right hand and supports the cross staff with his left [Fig. 3].8 Here as in any number of early sixteenth-century Madonna images, the slim cross comes so explicitly in association with the Precursor that it looks more like an attribute of the young John than an anticipation of Christ's Passion. Parmigianino's stream of drawings for the altarpiece traces the migration of the presence among radically different forms. It

⁵ Davitt-Asmus, "Zur Deutung" 307–308.

⁶ Mechanisms of a prophetic dimension are most ambitiously explored by Davitt-Asmus, who discerned in the image an analogy – by attenuated way of Filippo Picinelli's 1653 emblem book and St. Augustine's commentary on Psalm 30 – with a vase of balsam. If the Passion image she thus finds in the vase were known elsewhere in Medieval and Renaissance art the interpretation would be more compelling. A far more germane analogy between Virgin and vase is the aesthetic one discerned in the brilliant reading of the painting by Cropper, "On Beautiful Women".

⁷ Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. See also several of Parmigianino's drawings for the altarpiece that show him treading close to this ground, with negotiations of cross or urn between the infants Christ and John. For these drawings see Ekserdjian's remarkably detailed account; Ekserdjian, *Parmigianino* 191–211.

⁸ Red chalk over stylus. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Ekserdjian, *Parmigianino* 196–197.



Fig. 3. Parmigianino, study for Madonna of the Long Neck. Red chalk over stylus, 14.4 \times 11.3 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Image © Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY.

appears that at some point John the Baptist was excused, while his reed cross stayed on and settled eventually as a form on the surface of an angel-borne vessel.

There are earlier paintings, both Italian and northern, that have angels bringing the cross to the Child. But my main concern here is neither with a specific lineage of this idea nor, for that matter, with Parmigianino's altarpiece itself. It is rather with a widespread yet little-discussed tendency during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to visit the cross upon the Infancy in any number of unassuming ways. Paradoxically, the signifying density of the cross – which can be indivisibly artifact, image, shape, and sign – allows it often to seem more like a 'given' than an object or instrument of interpretation. This is especially so in the modern age, with the cross having widely become at least as much an emblem of a religion as it is a reference to one or more of its dimensions. Layers and implications of its identity were inevitably more apparent in many Renaissance minds, and perhaps in none more consciously than of those who represented it in diverse imagery.

Any number of artists were inclined not simply to introduce the shape or idea of the cross near the Christ Child, but to do so in ways that postpone, complicate, or deflect its recognition. While the core gesture of its inclusion belongs to the much larger framework of the proleptic Passion (imagery of the Child's sacrifice foreknown or foreseen), the ingenious reticence of so many of their solutions must be taken seriously. A look at several of these together reveals a striking range of approaches, each of which adapts a representational interest or inclination long associated with the painter in question. The effort required to recognize or imagine each of these crosses thus demands investment in a brand of thought especially dear or even native to the artist, who with it controls two essential distances: the one (within the image) between the Christ Child and his fate, and the one (from the image) between surface appearances and something deeper made available to a dedicated observer.

By way of provisional organization of this thoroughly malleable idea, let us begin with a work that manifestly includes a cross (however inconspicuous), and move toward several that rely in various ways on the

⁹ To cite but one striking example: a panel from Master Bertram's ca. 1400 *Buxtehude Altarpiece* (Hamburg, Kunsthalle) in which the reading Christ Child is interrupted by a pair of standing angels bearing adult-scale instruments of the Passion, the cross foremost among them. See Schneede U.M., *Goldgrund und Himmelslicht: Die Kunst des Mittelalters in Hamburg* (Hamburg: 1999) 124–129.



Fig. 4. Robert Campin and workshop, *Mérode Triptych* (ca. 1425–1430). Oil on panel, central panel 64.1×63.2 cm, each wing 64.5×27.3 cm. New York, The Cloisters Collection, 1956 (56.70a–c). Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY.

viewer to make it present. One of the more familiar Renaissance instances of a cross at the Infancy is the one in the *Mérode Triptych*, painted by Robert Campin or within his circle probably around 1430 [Fig. 4].¹⁰ As the Annunciation takes place in a domestic interior, the Word himself glides through the window with the instrument on his shoulder. By the middle of the fifteenth century such tiny figures of Christ approaching Mary were common enough to attract comment by St. Antoninus, the Archbishop of Florence – who dismissed them as *contra fidem*.¹¹ Some had begun to carry the cross already by the 1370s, as in the *Annunciation* from the Grabow Altarpiece for the Peterskirche in Hamburg, a large polyptych completed in 1379.¹² These and comparable prenatal crosses generate an unusual dimension of temporal consciousness. Whereas an Annunciation occupied by Mary and Gabriel alone – or by the two of them plus the dove of the Holy Spirit – resolves chiefly as an image of the news itself, those with an airborne Child animate the incarnation as well. And they do so

¹⁰ New York, Cloisters Collection. See Ainsworth M. et al., From Van Eyck to Bruegel: Early Netherlandish Painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York: 1998) 89–96.

¹¹ In his *Summa Theologica*; Gilbert C., "The Archbishop on the Painters of Florence, 1450", *Art Bulletin* 41 (1959) 76. For an iconographic study see Gwatkin N., *Emblem of Faith or of Heresy? Iconography of the Descending Christ-Child Figure in Northern European Art from noo to 1550*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of Maryland: 1999).

¹² Also by Master Bertram. Schneede, Goldgrund und Himmelslicht 101–111.

in a way that insists on sequence, an unfolding in moments. With Christ visible *en route*, the *Mérode Annunciation* asserts that the incarnation has yet to happen. The unscripted addition of the cross then doubles anticipation, with birth and death travelling together, equally imminent. Futurity is made all the more palpable by remaining just beyond the moment of the picture.

Leonardo's *Madonna of the Yarnwinder* draws us away from explicit presence toward other possibilities. The picture is known in several variants, two of which have been deemed closest to the master's own hand (the figures in each perhaps being at least partly autograph) [Figs. 5, 6]. The composition was described in a 1501 letter to Isabella d'Este, who was eager for something by Leonardo. It was written by Fra Pietro da Novellara, a Carmelite vicar acting on her behalf in Florence:

The little picture which he is doing is of a Madonna seated as if she were about to spin yarn. The Child has placed his foot on the basket of yarns and has grasped the yarnwinder and gazes attentively at the four spokes that are in the form of a cross. As if desirous of the cross he smiles and holds it firm, and is unwilling to yield it to his mother who seems to want to take it away from him.¹³

This is therefore *not* a cross, but rather a simple tool that looks like one. The yarnwinder is a staff with two short transverse bars affixed at 90-degree angles to one another. Although the Child curls a finger over the lower of these as he grasps the base with his right hand, his raised eyes and left index draw more attention to the higher one, where the figment of a cross comes into view. In the Buccleuch panel [Fig. 5] the crucial upper transverse, which is dark brown, is obscured by being set against a hill of trees near the horizon. There may have been more contrast when the colours were new, but it could never have been sharply defined in this configuration. Minor rearrangements of the landscape or pigments would have made the element far more vivid. Such changes are made in nearly all the other versions, which have either a lighter cross against a dark

^{13 &#}x27;Mah che ad ogni modo fornito chegli havesse un quadrettino che fa a uno Roberteto favorito del Re de Franza, farebbe subito el retrato e lo mandarebbe a V. Ex. Gli lasso dui boni sollicitadori. El quadretino che fa e una Madona che sede como se volesse inaspare fusi, el Bambino posto el piede nel canestrino dei fusi e ha preso laspo e mira atentamente que quattro raggi che sono in forma di Croce e como desideroso dessa Croce ride et tienla salda nola volendo cedere a la Mama che pare gela volia torre. Questo e quanto ho potuto fare cu lui'. As transcribed in Starnazzi C. (ed.), La 'Madonna dei fusi' di Leonardo da Vinci e il paesaggio del Valdarno Superiore (Arezzo: 2000) 35; and translated by Kemp M. (ed.), Leonardo da Vinci: The Mystery of the 'Madonna of the Yarnwinder' (Edinburgh: 1992) 11.



Fig. 5. Leonardo da Vinci and workshop, Madonna of the Yarnwinder (ca. 1501–1507). Oil on panel, 48.3×36.9 cm. Collection of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury. Image © Snark / Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 6. Leonardo da Vinci with assistance, Madonna of the Yarnwinder (The Lansdowne Madonna, ca. 1501–1507). Oil on canvas, 50.2 \times 36.4 cm. New York, Private Collection.

ground or a dark cross against a lighter ground, and sometimes a cross that rises above the horizon.¹⁴

The difference is stark in the panel now in a New York collection. ¹⁵ Here the crossbar rises above a dark hill to be backlit by shimmering mountains. Recognition is more immediate, and its implications resonate in fine strings of red varn that twine, as if dripping, around the shaft before coming to rest on the rocks below. Infrared reflectography has shown a substantial adjustment of the bar, which had initially been set on an angle opposed to its angle in the finished painting.¹⁶ This made the cross shape more visible as such from the viewpoint of the Christ Child. In the initial position its foreshortening would have made his view of the bar sideward and therefore not cruciform with the shaft. The decision to rotate it bespeaks the painting's dedication to the contingency of perception. Given his concern for how Christ sees the object, it should be wondered why the painter chose to make it something cross-like rather than a cross.¹⁷ One motive must have been a desire to cultivate the mental involvement that comes with such associative perception, which in this case works by representational rhyme. It is a mode of thought closely attuned to Leonardo's renowned remark that artists should observe accidental shapes that inspire the forms of more specific depictions:

If you look at any walls soiled with a variety of stains, or stones with variegated patterns, when you have to invent some location, you will therein be able to see a resemblance to various landscapes graced with mountains, rivers, rocks, trees, plains, great valleys and hills in many combinations. Or again you will be able to see various battles and figures darting about,

¹⁴ Examples illustrated in Pedretti C., "Leonardo dopo Milano", in Vezzosi A. (ed.), *Leonardo e il leonardismo a Napoli e a Roma* (Florence: 1983) 43–59.

¹⁵ Private Collection. Transferred from canvas. Kemp sees the Buccleuch panel earlier and the New York ('Lansdowne') one later, but still produced in Leonardo's studio with the master's possible participation. Gould sees the reverse, with the Lansdowne the earlier version and the Buccleuch panel a later reworking – but both with Leonardo's direct participation and from two originally worked cartoons; Kemp, *Mystery of the 'Madonna of the Yarnwinder'* 41; Gould C., "Leonardo's Madonna of the Yarnwinder: Revelations of Reflectogram Photography", *Apollo* 136 (July 1992) 13.

¹⁶ Gould, "Leonardo's Madonna of the Yarnwinder" 16. Some of this red yard is visible in the colour plate in Kemp, *Mystery of the 'Madonna of the Yarnwinder'*, 39. Infrared reflectography reveals that the yarn was more pronounced in the underdrawing, especially as it seems to have pulled down from the upper bar, into the Child's grasping left hand.

¹⁷ Could this Florentine have felt that an actual cross or cruciform staff was justifiable only as a delivery from the young John the Baptist, who is not here? This is doubtful given Leonardo's taste for iconographic invention, not to mention his inevitable familiarity with earlier images of the Christ Child holding the cross.

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strange-looking faces and costumes, and an endless number of things which you can distill into finely-rendered forms. And what happens with regard to such walls and variegated stones is just as with the sound of bells, in whose peal you will find any name or word you care to imagine.¹⁸

The cross perceived in the yarnwinder is different from suggestive stains on walls, in that one manmade object is evoking another and has been carefully situated to do so. But the same underlying operation of 'seeingas' is the engine of the painting, especially given the leap from the humble utility of a yarnwinder to the profound gravity of the implement it brings to mind. The painting should be understood less as a demonstration of Leonardo's advice than as evidence of his own constitutional attraction to what he terms *similitudini*.¹⁹ Its appeal would also have been related to the function of the image. Recall that the telling crossbar in the Buccleuch panel is almost meticulously obscured by the hills beyond. The resulting delay of recognition allows it to feel epiphanic and personal. One thinks, with some pleasure, that perhaps not everyone sees this.²⁰

These two observations about the *Yarnwinder* cross – that it was designed to deepen interest and that this was accomplished by means already associated with this artist in one way or another – lead us toward provisional answers to the question of why artists so often expended the energy they did on something more like insinuation than display of the

¹⁸ Codex Urbinas 35v (BN 2038 22v) as translated in Kemp M. – Walker M., *Leonardo on Painting* (New Haven – London: 1989) 222. A recent, extensive discussion of this phenomenon, which traces substantial roots for it in preceding generations, is Berra G., "Immagini casuali, figure nascoste e natura antropomorfa nell'immaginario artistico rinascimentale", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 43 (1999) 358–419. My thanks to Fabio Barry for this reference.

¹⁹ See also the classic essay by Janson: Janson H.W., "The 'Image Made by Chance' in Renaissance Thought", in Meiss M. (ed.), *De Artibus Opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky* (New York: 1961) 254–266. Leonardo's written conceptualization surely followed his explorations of a viewer's representational creativity – an idea with roots reaching at least as far back as Pliny.

²⁰ The impact grows as we grasp that our recognition is guided by Christ's, and to a lesser degree by that of Mary, whose raised hand is almost distractingly in motion as it hovers foreshortened forward with fingers half flexed. The gesture is ambiguous. One can read it equally as moving to stay his twisting reach or as having just released him to allow it. In a painting designed to invite a brand of mind-reading, a pronounced yet equivocal gesture can only expand a viewer's absorption in the moment. I address implications of this in Acres A., "Posing Intentions in Renaissance Art", in Chapuis J. (ed.), *Invention: Northern Renaissance Studies in Honor of Molly Faries* (Turnhout: 2008) 2–19. More specifically on this hand, see Joannides P., "Creative Distortion in the Renaissance: Lippi, Leonardo and Parmigianino", *Apollo* 136 (April 1992) 244, suggesting that a 'wide-angle' effect of the composition, which follows partly from a markedly off-center vanishing point (on Christ's grasping hand), emphasizes a sense of Mary's hand emerging from the picture.

cross in Infancy images. While there can be no single explanation, the rising abundance and diversity of such a gesture during the fifteenth century invite speculation about shared motives. The core idea of its presence was viable for almost any representation of the Child, whose identity is inseparable from his sacrifice. During generations in which religious pictures were being produced across a previously unimaginable range of formats and assertively different styles, a cue toward the Passion could distinguish a picture of the Madonna, Annunciation, or Nativity from countless others nominally of the same subject – and do so not just by the fact of such a cue, but even more by its own novelty or subtlety of means. And where novelty and subtlety can absorb an observer – by sustaining prayer, or intellectual satisfaction, or deliberation about purchasing a picture or hiring its artist for a new one – they can also often illuminate the instincts of a maker pursuing them.

Occasionally the shape of the cross informs the very setting of a scene. This seems an especially fitting strategy within Piero della Francesca's Legend of the True Cross cycle at Arezzo (Cappella Maggiore, San Francesco), where the Annunciation, which was a rare inclusion in such a program – is conceived so that the entire image is controlled by a cruciform division [Fig. 7]. This is managed by the horizontals and verticals of the architecture, the most pronounced element of which is the column between Gabriel and Mary. Significantly, these elements do not form a perfect cross. While the descending edge of the upper story does coincide with the left edge of the column below, none of the horizontal forms (polychrome bands, carved ornament, moulded edges) of the entablature flows smoothly across the central axis. The dark stripe of blue marble on the farther and nearer portions of the building proposes and at the same time withholds the connection, while the subtler horizontal shadows and contours in the white marble fail to align by smaller margins just above the capital.

This heavily planar orchestration corresponds to that in the *Dream of Constantine* on the other side of the window, which is likewise arranged around a cross shape that is compositional, central, and not quite fully resolved [Fig. 8].²¹ The post of Constantine's tent rises as the stem and

²¹ These schemes are noted e.g. by Hartt F., *History of Italian Renaissance Art*, 4th ed. (New York: 1994) 284–285. They are also amplified by the large thirteenth-century crucifix hanging between them, which may have been present, or echo a similar one that was present, when the frescoes were painted in the mid-fifteenth century. Carlo Bertelli notes that the cross predates the addition of the Capella Maggiore to the church, and that its altar

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Fig. 7. Piero della Francesca, Annunciation from the Legend of the True Cross cycle (ca. 1452–1466). Fresco. Arezzo, Basilica di San Francesco. Image © Scala / Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali / Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 8. Piero della Francesca, *Legend of the True Cross* (esp. Annunciation and Dream of Constantine, ca. 1452–1466). Fresco. Arezzo, Basilica di San Francesco. Image © Nicolo Orsi Battaglini / Art Resource, NY.

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meets a transverse in the seam around the roof. Here, as if to complement the cruciform core in the Annunciation across the way, it is the horizontal that is continuous (if curved), while the vertical is completed only implicitly, in the upper extent of the pole supporting the roof from within. Both scenes are thus informed by crosses realized in a viewer's imagination and inspired there by these almosts of composition. They are likewise brought close, of course, by the idea and life of the cross to which the whole program is dedicated. 22

This is the sort of elegant formal solution one might predict of Piero della Francesca, who was a writer on geometry and perspective, and one of the most intellectually calculating of pictorial composers. In contrast, an early Netherlandish painter like Robert Campin might be expected to find a more prosaic, material way to introduce the cross.²³ It was he, after all, who so unconventionally staged the Annunciation in a Flemish home crowded with tools of daily life [Fig. 4]. In a *Betrothal of the Virgin* panel now in Madrid, two episodes unfold in distinct yet linked architectural contexts: the Miracle of the Rods on the left in a round, columned temple; and the Betrothal of Mary and Joseph on the right, before the portal of a Gothic church [Fig. 9]. The clash of styles figures the shift between the old and new dispensations in the beginning of the Christ story, an idea elaborated by the unfinish of the newer edifice at right, still under construction.²⁴ The overdetermined contrast between the buildings gives

must have had a polyptych on it; Maetzke A.M. – Bertelli C. (eds.), *Piero della Francesca: The Legend of the True Cross in the Church of San Francesco in Arezzo* (Milan: 2001) 13 and n. 17.

 $^{^{22}}$ In the *Dream of Constantine* the form also has a literal presence in the tiny cross born downward by the angel. Seeing this, and remembering the tradition of crosses in Annunciations, one might expect to find one also in the corresponding scene. Instead there is in Gabriel's hand a palm branch, which can generally symbolize the victory of the faith and more specifically the Passion of Christ. But whether or not this symbolism was intended in the branch, proleptic thoughts would have been triggered more immediately by the programmatic circumstances of the *Annunciation* and its extraordinary composition. Maetzke – Bertelli, *Legend of the True Cross* 17 and n. 24.

²³ For thoughts on possible correspondences between the representational styles and iconological strategies of individual painters, see Harbison C., "Realism and Symbolism in Early Flemish Painting", *Art Bulletin* 66 (1984) 588–602.

²⁴ Panofsky E., *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, 2 vols. (New York: 1971), vol. I, 136. On the architecture, see also Frodl-Kraft E., "Der Tempel von Jerusalem in der 'Vermählung Mariae' des Meisters von Flemalle: Archäologische Realien und ideale Bildwirklichkeit", in Crosby S.M. et al. (eds.), *Etudes d'art médiévale offertes à Louis Grodecki* (Paris: 1981) 293–316. More recently on temporal symbolism of depicted architecture, in the Campin panel and far beyond, see Nagel A. – Wood C., *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: 2010) 147–158 ("Non-Actual Histories of Architecture").



Fig. 9. Robert Campin, *Marriage of the Virgin* (ca. 1430s). Oil on panel, 77×88 cm. Madrid, Museo del Prado. Image © Scala / Art Resource, NY.

unique prominence to the intervening foundation of a pier recently begun at the left edge of the church, abutting the temple. Rising just a few feet from the ground, the expectant surface is covered with a smattering of loose straw, upon which are a woven mat, a plank, and a stone. While these elements may on one level represent implements of actual building practice (for example, to protect the joining surface of the drum before the next is added), they are foregrounded in a way that demands further consideration. Graham Smith suggested convincingly that this 'stonemason's still-life' condenses Christ's life from the Nativity (straw from the manger) through the Crucifixion (wood of the cross), and the Resurrection (stone rolled from the tomb).²⁵ It was an extraordinary idea to invoke pivotal moments not by symbols, but instead by a material extraction from each episode. None of the objects would accomplish its reference alone,

 $^{^{25}\,}$ Smith G., "The Betrothal of the Virgin by the Master of Flemalle", Pantheon 30 (1972) 128.

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Fig. 10. Lorenzo Lotto, Madonna and Child with Saints (ca. 1505). Oil on canvas, transferred to panel, 80.50×102.50 cm. Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland (NG 2418). Image © National Gallery of Scotland.

but their congregation triangulates thoughts with urgent efficiency – each substance pressing on the next – toward Christ's birth, death, and Resurrection.

A final example also pursues indirection based on the substance of the cross rather than its shape, but with an unusual temporal dimension. It is a panel showing the *Madonna and Child with Saints* painted ca. 1505 by Lorenzo Lotto [Fig. 10]. Knowledge of the Passion is sensed in the solemn interaction of the figures, in Francis's indication of his side wound, and in the Child's scrutiny of a scroll held by the figure at left, probably St. Jerome, that one can imagine to carry a prophecy of the sacrifice.²⁶ More relevant here is the action in the landscape, which is made especially intriguing by a backcloth that allows only a slim vista across the top of the picture. Just right of center, two woodcutters are felling a tree; one is midswing as

²⁶ Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland. See Brown D.A. – Humfrey P. – Lucco M., *Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance* (New Haven: 1997) 72.

the other leans on his ax handle. One interpretation has associated them with Christ's words on the way to Calvary: 'If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?' (Luke 23: 31)²⁷ But it is equally possible that Lotto had a less specific citation in mind, since in this context the felling of a tree can hardly be dissociated from the making of the cross – regardless of whether we should imagine that this tree is the one that will bear him. Led to such a prospect, we also notice the painter's odd decision to slope the horizon so that it is invisible at the upper corners of the picture: at right there is only ground and trees, and at left only sky and clouds. Not only does the tree being felled thus stand on a steep hill (like Calvary), but the radically compressed vista also condenses an intersection of heaven and earth. This likely evocation of the cross, done in a way that thematizes the preparation of a future rather than offering a trace of it, squares with Lotto's deep fascination not merely with landscape (which was in its infancy as an independent subject in precisely these years in the Veneto and beyond), but more specifically with sparsely populated landscape as a virtual laboratory of metaphor. The best examples of this in his work may be two small panels painted within a year of this one, both now in Washington: an Allegory of Virtue and Vice and an Allegory of Chastity – often called the *Dream of the Maiden*. ²⁸ A mere glance at these complex pictures and their literature is enough to demonstrate that the manipulation of landscape as a field of rich meaning was close to Lotto's heart in these years and, turning again to the woodcutters of the Edinburgh panel, perhaps an irresistible venue in which to plant the cross near the Child – before its time, as it were.²⁹

Bearing in mind this thread of an artist's symbolic instincts, we may conclude with a return to Parmigianino's altarpiece [Fig. 1]. One reason for the introduction of its cross may entail the work's commission by Elena Baiardo for the chapel of her late husband, Francesco Tagliaferri, in Parma's Church of Santa Maria dei Servi. 30 Despite having been left unfinished

²⁷ Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto* 72.

²⁸ National Gallery of Art 1939.1.156 and 1939.1.147. See Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto* 76–80, 84–87.

²⁹ In this vein it is possible also to see parallel allusion to the Flagellation in the paired inward focus of the woodsmen. I thank Diane Apostolos-Cappadona for this observation.

³⁰ Francesco Tagliaferri died in 1529. In a sense he initiated the commission by having his will stipulate that his wife should arrange for the decoration of his chapel. The intended presence of St. Francis in the altarpiece is because he was Francesco's onomastic saint; Ekserdjian, *Parmigianino* 191. Ekserdjian notes that Jerome is less easy to explain, but that these two saints, 'fellow eremiticals', were often paired in Renaissance painting.

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when Parmigianino died in 1540, the altarpiece was installed there in 1542. The earliest preliminary drawings for the project, including one now in the British Museum, prominently feature Saints Francis and Jerome – the former surely because he was the name saint of Francesco Tagliaferri, and the latter for reasons less clear. As the drawings progress, the saints recede, but do not disappear in the altarpiece: St. Jerome stands at right, unfurling a scroll in a weirdly disjunctive middle ground. He was meant to have been addressing St. Francis, who had been realized as no more than a ghostly foot before the painter died. As

It has been suggested that the gradual retreat of Francis, and with him Jerome, in the composition may have been in favour of a stronger presence for Francesco's wife, the hands-on patron. Elena Baiardo's name saint was Helena, who discovered the True Cross in the fourth century.³³ If the cross on the angel's vessel was meant to recall Helena's defining moment, it would be tempting to consider the True Cross legend itself as something more than a pretext for onomastic reference to Elena. Perhaps it could account for a more substantial dimension of the image. The legend hinges, after all, on moments of discovery, as when the Queen of Sheba recognizes the wood in a bridge, or its healing powers are later revealed while the wood floats in the pool at Bethesda, or, indeed, when Helena finds the hiding place of the three crosses and devises a test to discern the one that held Christ. Could it have been with such episodes in mind that Parmigianino painted a cross that requires some effort and rewards it with a sense of discovery?

Beyond the dynamic of discovery, the notion of posterity itself is also integral to the legend, since the story of the True Cross begins long before it was a cross and continues centuries after the Crucifixion. It begins in Eden, where the wood is said to have begun as a branch on the Tree of Knowledge that Adam carried into the world after the Expulsion. The legend amounts to an argument for the eternal identity not only of the appa-

³¹ London, British Museum. Ekserdjian, Parmigianino 192, fig. 199.

³² One especially moving drawing (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. Ekserdjian, *Parmigianino* 209, fig. 226) ponders the conversation of the two saints back there in three different ways. The inscription visible on the step near them in the painting was posthumous and refers to the painter's demise. It is touching that his name was Francesco, too, and his saint has vanished.

³³ Shearman, *Only Connect* 236; Ekserdjian, *Parmigianino* 210. From among many medieval permutations of the True Cross story, see e.g. the widely influential account from the *Golden Legend:* Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. W.G. Ryan, 2 vols. (Princeton: 1993), vol. I, 277–283.

ratus on Calvary, but also of its substance and power. This eternity of the cross may in some measure have underwritten the popularity of prenatal crosses in images of the Annunciation. With that, it is worth noticing that the memory of the Annunciation colours Parmigianino's Madonna, who is approached by an angel bearing news of the future. Vasari understood or at least sensed this in his second of his two sentences on the painting, which he hailed as an example of 'that style of his, full of grace and beauty / in quella sua maniera piena di grazia e di bellezza'.³⁴

Piena di grazia is a phrase best known as part of Gabriel's salutation to Mary, but in Vasari's time it was no less famously applicable to the art of Parmigianino. The insinuated or hidden cross was persistently appealing to Renaissance artists in part because it enlivens a point of theology so elemental as to seem almost obvious. Inventive articulations of its presence invited fresh attention from observers whose sustained interest, as a matter of prayer or for other attractions, was desirable for painters working in increasingly diversified, interconnected, and competitive markets. It is with this in mind that I have been arguing that one mark of its special appeal is the frequency with which individual solutions pivot on aspects of style or theory that we strongly associate with each artist: Leonardo's fascination with forms recognizable in others, Piero's work in geometry, Campin's modulation of the most prosaic material circumstances, Lotto's explorations of symbolic landscape, and so on. With varying degrees of consciousness, it is a theme that major artists – these ones and others – seem to have taken personally.35

The same appears to be true of Parmigianino, who handled this painting as something more than another commission. The sheer abundance and variety of his drawings for it bespeak a special investment, perhaps his sense of the work as a high-profile performance in his hometown, to which he had returned in 1530 after successful years (1524–1530) in Rome and Bologna. The cast of the altarpiece may reflect this personal stake. While it is true that Francis was the name saint of Francesco Tagliaferri and that it was not uncommon to pair Francis and Jerome in Renaissance

 $^{^{34}}$ Ekserdjian ($Parmigianino\ 210$) notes Vasari's use of this Annunciation-evoking phrase and remarks that it is 'a form of words he used on only two other occasions throughout the Lives'.

³⁵ Within a more wide-ranging discussion of Passion references in Infancy imagery I address additional examples, including works by Hieronymus Bosch (*Boy with a Whirligig*; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum) and Jan Gossaert (*Virgin and Child*; National Gallery of Art acc. no. 1981.87.1); Acres A., *Renaissance Invention and the Haunted Infancy* (Turnhout: forthcoming).

paintings (both are in the Lotto panel in Edinburgh), the choice of Jerome in so deeply cogitated a painting was more than an iconographic reflex. The inclusion of a husband and wife's saints in an altarpiece was traditional enough, but here we need to consider seriously the possibility that Parmigianino had himself in mind, too. 'Parmigianino' is of course a nickname, a diminutive derived from his hometown. His professional name was Francesco Mazzola, but his full given name was Francesco Girolamo Maria Mazzola: Francis, Jerome, Maria Mazzola.³⁶ It cannot be proved that he meant this pair of saints with Mary as an insertion of himself, but it is also impossible to believe he was unaware that together they fully embodied his own birth name.

Whether or not he intended the figures that way, there remains the question of his solution for the cross. Is there something innately Parmigianinesque about having it appear on a curved reflective surface? There is. To see this we need look no further than the Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror, perhaps the only work of his more famous today than the Madonna of the Long Neck. More important here is the fact that the small painting was also famous in his own time. Painted when Parmigianino was twenty-one, the unprecedented picture on a convex wooden panel denies any distance between a painted surface and a reflective one [Fig. 11].³⁷ Claiming full optical truth by means of dizzving artifice, it was made as a showpiece. Vasari reports that young Parmigianino sent it to Clement VII, who immediately invited him to Rome.³⁸ Whether or not this is exactly what happened, the portrait came to be understood as a brilliant calling card, the precocious master's self-introduction to the highest of patrons. Its reputation was thus guaranteed from the start, and it soon made its way into the hands of a series of elite collectors, including Pietro Aretino, whom Vasari reports as having received it as a gift from the pope. Parmigianino had obviously not forgotten the picture and what it said about him as he designed his altarpiece for the Servite Church, and there decided eventually to conjure the most eternal of forms on the gleam of a swelling object.³⁹

 $^{^{36}}$ 'Jeronimus franciscus maria f[i]l[ius] philipi de mazolis' in his birth record. Ekserdjian, $Parmigianino\ 2.$

³⁷ Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

 $^{^{38}}$ According to the 1550 edition of the *Vite*. In 1568 the story changes, as Parmigianino's uncles encourage him to paint some pictures to take with him to Rome, this one among them. Ekserdjian, *Parmigianino* 130.

³⁹ This evidently personal dimension makes especially suggestive Vasari's report that Parmigianino was buried 'as he wished, naked with a cross made of cypress upright on



Fig. 11. Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (ca. 1525). Oil on wood, diameter 24.4 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Image © Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

his chest / come lasciò, fu sepolto nudo, con una croce d'arcipresso sul petto in alto' (ed. Milanesi, vol. V, 234).

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DISPLAY AND DEVOTION: EXHIBITING ICONS AND THEIR COPIES IN COUNTER-REFORMATION ITALY

Andrew R. Casper

The Catholic assertion of the legitimacy of religious images in the Counter-Reformation was predicated on a long-standing conviction of the inherent primacy of vision.1 Gregory the Great, after all, had declared that through visual aids the faithful could most easily comprehend the stories that are of direct theological importance. Further scrutiny of the precise manner by which the Church promoted and facilitated this particular sensorial act through the medium of the image will allow us to appreciate more fully the unique privilege accorded to the sense of sight in providing the faithful with an ocular or viewable religious experience.² This article explores the contingencies of the act of viewing involved in the public display of two objects representing a unique class of icon-relics in the years following the closing of the Council of Trent: exhibitions of St. Veronica's veil at the 1575 Jubilee in Rome and the 1578 ostension of the Shroud of Turin. Belief that visual perception stimulated spiritual arousal fostered a need for the artistic reproduction of these two participants in Christ's Passion to serve a variety of devotional needs. I assert that the painter El Greco's witness of the 1575 Holy Year festivities during his stay in Rome catalyzed a series of painted images of the Veronica soon after. The ostension of the Shroud prompted the production of souvenir prints copying the cloth – beginning with Giovanni Testa's 1578 engraving that both documents its first exhibition in Turin and reproduces its visible features for private devotional purposes. By examining these derivative images while considering the events that inspired their creation, I will provide new insights into how their prestige was consequent to their need to be viewed. I will then discuss how the act of viewing a sacred image could be repeated and re-enacted with the aid of the respective objects' artificial duplicates.

 $^{^1}$ Summers D., The Judgment of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics (Cambridge: 1990) 32–41.

² Here we are reminded of Thomas Aquinas's assertion that images 'excite the emotions which are more effectively aroused by things seen than by things heard'. See Freedberg D., *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: 1989) 162.

Viewing the Veronica, Seeing the Shroud

Worshippers regarded the Veronica as the original towel stained with the features of Christ's face after he wiped it with his blood and sweat while carrying the cross to Calvary.³ What they saw was a direct record of his facial features at the time he endured the events fulfilling his fate as the sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. The Shroud of Turin is a fourteen-foot sheet of linen on which appear ethereal yet unmistakable life-size images of the front and back of Christ's battered body, punctuated by vivid stains of blood that issued from his wounds. Believers held it to be the very burial cloth used for Christ's entombment as mentioned, albeit briefly, in John 19:40.⁴ The cloth therefore records Christ's posture – prostrate with hands crossed at his waist – while lying in the tomb up until the moment of his Resurrection.⁵ While the Veronica provides eyewitness testimony of one of the Stations of the Cross, the Shroud itself was treated as a compendium of all Passion relics because it bears the marks administered by each of the instruments that contributed to Christ's death.

The burgeoning cult following of the Veronica and Shroud in the second half of the sixteenth century can be attributed in part to the official reaffirmation of the efficacy of visual aids promoted by the Council of Trent in 1563.⁶ We often take for granted the fact that this decree addressed relics and icons together, underscoring their shared goals to inspire devotion. The two objects that concern us here are especially illustrative of this duality of material and representational authority because they display traces of Christ's physical matter in the shape of an image. As docu-

³ Recent studies on the Veronica include Belting H., Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art (Chicago: 1994) 215–224; Kessler H. – Wolf G. (eds.), The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation: Papers from a Colloquium Held at the Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome and the Villa Spelman, Florence, 1996 (Bologna: 1998); Kuryluk E., Veronica and Her Cloth: History, Symbolism, and Structure of a 'True Image' (Oxford: 1991); Morello G. – Wolf G. (eds.), Il volto di Cristo (Milan: 2000).

⁴ Despite the legion of scientific and investigative analyses of the Shroud, usually motivated by a desire to prove or disprove its authenticity, historical analyses of the relic are rare. See most recently Zaccone G.M., *La Sindone: Storia di una immagine* (Milan: 2010). For the undocumented history of the Shroud before the medieval period, including a controversial hypothesis that links it with the Mandylion of Edessa, see Wilson I., *The Shroud of Turin: The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (Garden City: 1978) 66–194.

⁵ However, the process by which the image adhered to the Shroud is still a matter of intense debate. An example of the various scientific, cultural, and historical analyses devoted towards the Shroud is found in Barbaris B. – Zaccone G.M. (eds.), *Sindone: Cento anni di ricerca* (Rome: 1998).

⁶ Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent (St. Louis: 1941) 215–216.

mentary witnesses to and participants in the principal events forming the cornerstone of the Christian faith, these are the only icons of Christ that also enjoy the devotional prestige of an index.⁷ The Shroud and Veronica thus constitute a unique class of images of Christ believed to be *acheiropoetic* – that is, created through direct physical contact with the body, not through indirect artificial means.⁸ It is this status both as true images projecting the authentic likeness of Christ and as relics consisting of sanguineous stains signalling the truth of his life and death that legitimizes St. Veronica's cloth and the Shroud of Turin as items of particular devotional privilege.

The public display of these two icon-relics in the 1570s provoked various forms of artistic representation. Of the around half a dozen images of the Veronica that scholars have attributed to El Greco, at least four repeat the form of the cloth and its miraculous image in nearly identical ways. These conform to two primary types: one shows the Veronica as an identifiable attribute in a portrait of its owner [Fig. 1]. The other features the relic as a still-life, as if nailed against an unidentified black ground [Fig. 2].⁹ In both forms we see the cloth stretched lengthwise in order to display the mysterious yet vivid face of Christ that adhered to its surface.

El Greco painted these works in the years immediately following his departure from Rome in 1576, not long after having witnessed the exhibition of the Veronica at the 1575 Jubilee. This was only the second documented public exhibition of the veil since the 1527 Sack, and the first Holy Year to display it since 1525. It was by all accounts a watershed event with a reported attendance of over 400,000 pilgrims from all over Europe. Additionally, as the first Jubilee after the conclusion of the Council of

⁷ For the Shroud as an index, see Didi-Huberman G., "The Index of the Absent Wound (Monograph on a Stain)", *October* 29 (1984) 63–81; Didi-Huberman G., *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art* (University Park: 1990) 194.

⁸ See Belting, *Likeness and Presence* 49–57.

⁹ For more on El Greco's paintings of the Veronica, see Casper A.R., "El Greco, the Veronica and the Art of the Icon", in Hadjinicolaou N. (ed.), *El Greco's Studio: Proceedings of the International Symposium. Rethymnon, Crete, 23–25 September 2005* (Iraklion: 2007) 135–148; Hadjinicolaou N., "El Greco: *La Santa Faz*", in *Classics of Modern Art* (Andros: 1999) 26–33.

¹⁰ There is no mention of the Veronica at the 1550 opening of the Porta Santa in *L'ordine* et cerimonie usate dalla santità di Papa Giulio III l'anno MDL in aprire le Porte Sante (Venice, Francesco Rampazetta: 1575).

¹¹ Reports estimate one hundred thousand more pilgrims than usual in 1575, and Rome apparently received one hundred times the number of pilgrims that normally visit the holy city of Jerusalem. See Pientini Angelo, *Le Pie Narrationi delle opere piu memorabili fatte in Roma l'anno del giubileo 1575* (Viterbo, Agostino Colaldo: 1577) 69 and 178–179.



Fig. 1. El Greco, St. Veronica with the Sudarium (1580). Oil on canvas, 84×91 cm. Toledo, Museo de Santa Cruz. Image © Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

Trent, the 1575 Holy Year celebrated the Church triumphant, providing the papacy an opportunity to brandish their most prized possessions. Pilgrimage guidebooks to the Jubilee encouraged visitors to venerate the relics pertaining to the life and mysteries of Christ most especially, so items like the Veronica and the iron point from St. Longinus's spear, both of which were kept in the same chapel at St. Peter's Basilica, were targets of particularly intense devotion. The most fervent public attention to the

¹² Pientini, Le Pie Narrationi 167. The precise location of these items is described in Panvinio Onofrio, Le sette chiese principali di Roma (Rome, gli heredi di Antonio Blado: 1570) 56. See also Zini Pier Francesco, L'anno santo MDLXXV nel pontificato di N. S. Papa



Fig. 2. El Greco, *St. Veronica's Veil* (1580). Oil on canvas, 51×66 cm. Private Collection.

Veronica occurred at the opening and closing of the basilica's Porta Santa, events that marked the official beginning and end of the Holy Year festivities. Woodcut images featured in some early editions of the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* give us some sense of the way in which the faithful had access to the cloth [Fig. 3]. A group of church officials displayed it from a raised balcony or platform so that it could be viewed by crowds of onlookers below.

Gregorio XIII: Avertimenti per ricevere con frutto il Giubileo nell'anno santo, & le Indulgentie in ogni tempo & luogo (Venice, Francesco Rampazetto: 1575), fol. 55v. The two objects were apparently put on public display more often than normal in 1575. See Alfani F. Tommaso-Maria, Istoria degli Anni Santi al di loro solenne cominciamento per infino a quello del regnante Sommo Pontefice Benedetto XIII (Naples, Gennaro Muzio: 1725) 335. The Veronica was customarily shown on every Friday throughout the Jubilee. See Fagiolo M. – Madonna M. (eds.), Roma 1300–1875: L'arte degli anni santi (Milan: 1984) 106; Riera Raffaele, Historia utilissima, et dilettevolissima delle cose memorabili passate nell'Alma Città di Roma l'Anno del gran Giubileo MDLXXV (Macerata, Sebastiano Martellini: 1580) 70–71.

¹³ A crush of pilgrims at Saint Peter's for the opening of the Porta Santa in 1575 resulted in the deaths of six people. Pastor L., *The History of the Popes: From the Close of the Middle Ages* (London: 1930), vol. XIX, 201.



Fig. 3. Woodcut illustration to *Mirabilia urbis Romae* (Nuremberg, Peter Wagner: 1500), fol. Cir. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.



Fig. 4. Giovanni Testa, *Il verissimo ritratto del Santissimo Sudario* (1578). Engraving, 19 \times 52 cm. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria (q.VII.48). Image © Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino.

This emphasis on the act of display indicates that it was apparently not enough to know that the Veronica existed, but for the worshipper to see it, to confirm with the eyes that which the heart holds to be true regarding the events it commemorates. The benefit, evidently, was that the power of sight incited unbridled forms of spiritual rapture. Observers documented the heartfelt and intense displays of devotional fervour that the Veronica aroused during the Holy Year celebrations. Gregory Martin later saw the exhibition of the relic during Holy Thursday processions that took place in Rome between 1576 and 1578. He reported that the solemn presentation of the cloth with St. Longinus's spear provoked 'al the people [into falling] upon theyr knees, crying misericordia, and making doleful shoutes, and the Flagellanti then especially whipping theyr bodies and punishing theyr flesh'. 15

Worshipping the Shroud of Turin was equally a process mediated through the act of viewing. Giovanni Testa's 1578 engraving of the ostension of the Shroud commemorates the relic's first public exhibition after the Savoy permanently moved it from Chambéry, France to their new capital in Turin [Fig. 4]. This print shows the Shroud held aloft by Cardinals Carlo Borromeo and Guido Ferrero, as well as nine other bishops and archbishops from surrounding dioceses. Behind these authorities we see the heads of eleven other ministers dressed in liturgical habits and holding crosses, crosiers, and candles who assist in the displaying of the cloth. ¹⁶

¹⁴ See Riera, Historia utilissima 69.

¹⁵ Martin G., Roma Sancta (1581), ed. G.B. Parks (Rome: 1969) 90.

¹⁶ For a detailed account of this ostension, see Adorno Francesco, Lettera della peregrinatione di mons. ill.mo cardinale di S. Prassede arcivescovo di Milano per visitar la santa



Fig. 5. Antonio Tempesta, *The Annual Display of the Holy Shroud of Turin on 4 May* (after 1593). Etching and woodcut on silk, 43×62 cm. London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings (1862,0712.502). Image © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Public showings of such a devotionally potent relic were monumental affairs, often drawing pilgrims numbering in the tens, even hundreds of thousands to Turin.¹⁷ Antonio Tempesta's engraving commemorating the frequent ostensions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries records the magnitude of such spectacles [Fig. 5].¹⁸ It presents a wideangle view of the festivities on Turin's Piazza Castello with the Shroud displayed from a platform in the middle of the square. Groups of onlookers observe the scene from balconies and rooftops while mounted police con-

Sindone di nostro Signore Gesù Cristo (Milan, Pacifico Pontio: 1578). Carlo Borromeo traveled on foot from Milan to Turin, arriving on October 9 at the city gates under a torrential downpour. The following day the cardinal was given a private introduction to the Shroud, where he broke down in tears at the sight of Christ's image. That Sunday, October 12, the Shroud was displayed for the first time to the public in Turin. After celebrating Mass at the Cathedral, Borromeo and other church officials ascended a platform constructed specifically for this event in the spacious Piazza Castello and draped the Shroud over the balcony rail for all to see. It was shown again to the public two days later, on October 14.

¹⁷ For a history of the ostensions of the Shroud, see Fossati L., *La Sacra Sindone: Storia documentata di una secolare venerazione* (Turin: 2000).

¹⁸ Bury M., The Print in Italy: 1550-1620 (London: 2001) 56.

trol the masses clamouring to catch a glimpse of the faint image of Christ recorded on the surface of the cloth. The experience engendered by the sight of the actual relic must have been especially arousing, stimulating a devotional fervour that at least equalled that inspired by the Veronica in Rome.¹⁹ A poster advertising an ostension to take place on May 28, 1684 reinforces the notion that such spiritual rapture was to be generated by a distinctly visual encounter. A line of text below an illustration of five ecclesiastical figures displaying the Shroud clearly invites all faithful Christians, 'subjects of Turin and foreigners alike', to celebrate the 'sight of that holy treasure' (emphasis mine).²⁰ These public exhibitions continued unabated even after the relic was permanently installed in the chapel that Guarino Guarini designed for it in Turin's Cathedral of St. John in 1694. The fact that Guarini's design specifically enhanced the visual contingencies of the relic within this new ceremonial setting says much about the importance placed on its role as protagonist within a visible spectacle.²¹ Therefore, officials promoted the public exhibition of the Shroud – and we must assume the same for the Veronica as well – as a phenomenon that appealed foremost to the eye. Through these exhibitions we see the Church's realization of the importance of the act of viewing as the most direct means for reinforcing faith in the authenticity of these objects and the events in which they took part.

Image, Presence, and the Eucharist

Of course, not all images were lavished with such lofty ceremonies. The fact that El Greco and Giovanni Testa chose to portray the Veronica and Shroud as objects in the midst of being displayed (instead of merely reproducing their respective subjects' features) valorises the exhibiting act itself as essential to their meaning. I propose here that putting the Veronica

¹⁹ Adorno recounts that 'an innumerable multitude of men and women $[\ldots]$ shouted with immense devotion and compassion' upon seeing the Shroud. See Fossati, *La Sacra Sindone* 104–106.

²⁰ 'Havendo loro altezze reali risoluto di differire la solennizatione della festa della Sacratissima Sindone, non ostante l'invito fatto per il 22 di Maggio, s'intima a tutti li fedeli Christiani, tanto sudditi, quanto forastieri, l'espositione per il giorno 28. del corrente, festa della Santissima Trinita, invitando ogn'uno a concorrere con divoto affetto alla celebratione di detta festa, partecipando della commune allegrezza vista di quel celeste tesoro, e plenarie indulgenze. Torino li 10 Maggio 1684'. Illustrated in Scott J.B., *Architecture for the Shroud: Relic and Ritual in Turin* (Chicago: 2003) plate 5.

²¹ The definitive study of Guarini's chapel is Scott, Architecture for the Shroud.

and Shroud repeatedly on public view was motivated by an emphasis on asserting the Catholic doctrine of real presence. This issue, of course, finds its most direct parallel in contemporary conceptions of the Eucharist. The host had always performed an intensely visual role within the theology of Holy Communion and its re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice.²² But these issues regarding the role of sight were especially emphasized in the second half of the sixteenth century. After the extensive discussions about and re-affirmations of transubstantiation at the Council of Trent,²³ theologians directed focused attention to the manner by which the host was displayed to congregants at the Mass. This preoccupation with the mystery of the Eucharist and the evidence of its miraculous conversion from bread into flesh engendered new strategies that further enhanced the worshipper's experiential communion with Christ's body through the medium of the host. Alterations to liturgical practices enforced by the Tridentine Mass included an increase in the number of instances in which the priest performed the *elevatio*. This ritualistic act of display provided a visual spectacle that brought the worshipper into a direct visual engagement with the consecrated bread.²⁴ It allowed congregants to see with their bodily eyes if not the miraculous transformation itself then at least the species in which this miracle occurred, and therefore to come in direct visual contact with what amounted to an infinitely renewable trace of Christ's sacrificed body.

The manner by which officials displayed the Veronica and Shroud, holding them up to the gaze of faithful onlookers, mimics this elevation of the communion wafer. In both cases there is a causal relationship between sight and belief. The Catechism of the Council of Trent, published in 1566, asserted that the consecration of the blood especially 'places before our

The literature on vision and the Eucharist for the medieval period is vast. See, among many others, Bynum C.W., "Seeing and Seeing Beyond: The Mass of St. Gregory in the Fifteenth Century", in Bouché A.-M. – Hamburger J. (eds.), The Mind's Eye: Art and Theology in the Middle Ages (Princeton: 2005) 208–240; Göttler C., "Is Seeing Believing? The Use of Evidence in Representations of the Miraculous Mass of Saint Gregory", The Germanic Review 76 (2001) 120–142; eadem, Last Things: Art and the Religious Imagination in the Age of Reform, Proteus: Studies in Early Modern Identity Formation 2 (Turnhout: 2010) 31–69.

²³ Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent 75.

²⁴ For a history of the vision of the host within the liturgy of the Mass, see Jungman J.A., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* (Westminster: 1986), vol. II, 206–212. For the *elevatio* as the consecration of the host, see Wandel L.P., *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (Cambridge: 2006) 237–240.

eyes, in more vivid colours, Christ's Passion, crucifixion, and death'.25 In order to extend this spiritual, visual experience beyond the liturgical confines of the Mass, Carlo Borromeo suggested the construction of monumental tabernacles in the sacred spaces of churches. These structures, typically large monstrances placed on the altar table itself, functioned to provide the worshipper a perpetual view of the host in order to engage in what has aptly been termed an 'ocular communion'.26 Further evidence for the conflation of vision and communion is the fact that contemporary mystics articulated their visionary experiences in Eucharistic terms. St. Teresa, who maintained an especially fervent devotion towards the Eucharist, wrote that 'almost invariably the Lord showed himself to me in his resurrected body, and it was thus, too, that I saw him in the host' (emphasis mine).27 In The Way of Perfection she acknowledged the superiority of the sight of the host and the real presence of Christ contained inside it over its mere representation in pictures: You may be in the habit of praying while looking at a picture of Christ, but at a time like this it seems foolish to me to turn away from the living image - the Person Himself – to look at His picture'. 28 The existence of Christ's flesh in the host, then, establishes a sacred hierarchy that reduces the empty icon to a lower order of prestige, making it less visually appealing than the doubling of the real thing offered through communion.

Yet the repeated public showings of Veronica's veil and the Shroud of Turin starting in the years after the end of the Council of Trent might have come directly out of these efforts to bolster belief in their own real presence through the performance of a visual spectacle. I submit that the Counter-Reformation emphasis on the miraculous transubstantiation of the Eucharist had a direct corollary effect of reinvigorating the importance of these icon-relics as objects especially worthy of veneration. Just as viewing the host will affirm the real presence contained inside it by way of transubstantiation, sight of the Veronica and Shroud will also

²⁵ The Catechism of the Council of Trent: Published by Command of Pope Pius the Fifth, trans. Rev. J. Donovan (Baltimore: 1829) 155.

²⁶ See Kilde J.H., Sacred Power, Sacred Space: An Introduction to Christian Architecture (Oxford: 2008) 99. See also Borromeo Carlo, Instructiones fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae (1577); translated in Voelker E.C., Charles Borromeo's "Instructiones fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae": A Translation with Commentary and Analysis, Ph.D. dissertation (Syracuse University: 1977) 160–173.

²⁷ Teresa of Avila, *The Life of the Holy Mother Teresa of Jesus* (ca. 1566); translated in Peers A. (ed.), *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*, 3 vols. (London: 2002), vol. I, 188.

²⁸ Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection* (ca. 1566); translated in Peers, *The Complete Works*, vol. II, 149.

allow for a visible witness to divine matter.²⁹ Besides the shared emphasis on display to bring the public into direct visual contact with objects of extreme devotional importance, they also share a typological connection with the transubstantiated host. The Veronica and Shroud of Turin are, essentially, 'Eucharistic' relics. This is not to say that there was a liturgical function assigned to them, but only that their status as images formed out of Christ's bodily material fused to a cloth medium parallels the more supernatural transformation of bread into the physical matter of flesh and that of wine into blood. The Eucharistic character of these objects is underscored by the fact that the Veronica had been used as an emblem for the host even much earlier in the medieval period.³⁰

The documentary history of the Shroud of Turin is especially helpful for gauging historical awareness of its physical essence vis-à-vis the Eucharist. Pierre D'Arcis, bishop of Troyes under the Avignon Pope Clement VII, famously asserted in 1389 that the Shroud was the cunning work of a forger, that what we see is in fact the stuff of painting, not the stuff of Christ's body.³¹ Nonetheless, most Christians later believed that the fabric supported traces of Christ's actual blood ever since Pope Sixtus IV first affirmed its existence in the 1473 publication of *De sanguine Christi*. ³² Consequently, this transfer of fluid from the seeping wounds of the body to the Shroud's absorbent weave of linen imparts further significance to the relationship between divine image and sacred prototype. By gazing upon and venerating the fabric's anthropomorphic stain of blood and sweat, Emanuele Tesauro asserts in his Sacred Panegyric on the Shroud that, 'if in other paintings one praises the likeness ("il verisimile"), here one praises the real ("il vero"), given that the type and prototype, the copy and original, the "ideated" and the "idea", the coloured and the colour, and the painter and the painting are all one and the same'. 33 The operative idea

²⁹ For the 'visual evidence' of transubstantiation see Clark S., *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: 2007) 183–191.

³⁰ See Bynum, "Seeing and Seeing Beyond" 210.

³¹ Cited in Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin* 266–272.

³² 'Quod si sanctam Crucem '[...] adoramus, dignum profecto videtur et debitum, ipsam sanctam Sindonem, in qua reliquiae humanitatis Christi quam divinitas sibi copulaverat, videlicet ipsius veri sanguinis, ut praefertur, manifeste conspiciuntur, venerari et adorari debere'; cited in Fossati, *La Sacra Sindone* 56 n. 19.

³³ '[...] se nelle altre pitture si loda il verisimile, in questa si loda il vero, essendo il tipo e il prototipo, la copia e l'originale, l'ideato e l'idea, il colorito e il colore, il pittore e la pittura tutto una cosa'. Tesauro Emanuele, *Panegirici*, 2 vols. (Turin, Bartolomeo Zavatta: 1659), vol. II, 38; see also Doglio M.L., "Grandezze e meraviglie' della Sindone nella letteratura del Seicento", in Comoli V. – Giacobello G. (eds.), *Il potere e la devozione: La Sindone e la Biblioteca Reale di Torino* (Milan: 2000) 23–24. See also Maggi A., "The Word's Self-

here is that the copy and original elide into a single entity, and so it is as if Christ himself is present, both in body and in image, among the Shroud's linen fibres. Because of the nature of its creation (not by artificial means but by receiving Christ's own blood through contact with his body), contemporary viewers likened the stain transferred from the body to the surface of the cloth to a very sacred stamp or print composed of Christ's own physical body. In a paradoxical affirmation of the object's artifice to explain its non-artificial origins, Tesauro declared that the image came into being when the separate parts of the body painted themselves on the cloth while evading the deceit of the artist's brush.³⁴

We might say, to put it bluntly, that both the Veronica and Shroud, because of the processes by which they came into being, were conceived to be *duplicates* of Jesus, self-generated copies discharged from his body that provided the viewer an opportunity to gaze upon Christ himself. Therefore, the display of these images had an advantage that other more 'ordinary' icons did not have. Since the Council of Trent reinforced the trope that images only serve as conduits to their prototype, these two Passion relics allowed for an unusually close communion with Christ's body. Furthermore, John Beldon Scott has outlined how period conceptions of intromission optics made viewing objects like the Veronica and Shroud visual encounters of an especially mystical nature. The existence of species films or mask-like sheaths radiating off of viewed objects that get intercepted by the eye – enable these relics to broadcast not just their images but also the physical body of Christ directly to the viewer.³⁵ Since it is this same sense of presence that usually has to be denied for mere images not to be taken as idols, the display of these icon-relics provides a visible experience that could otherwise only be facilitated by the elevation of the Eucharist. The difference, however, was that the Shroud and Veronica preserved both presence and likeness, whereas the host contained only the substance of his transubstantiated body.

Portrait in Blood: The Shroud of Turin as Ecstatic Mirror in Emanuele Tesauro's Baroque Sacred Panegyrics", The Journal of Religion 85 (2005) 582–608.

³⁴ 'Peroche quel medesimo nume che di amore e di simpathia col fiato di un *Fiat* fabricò il mondo dalla sua idea, per fabricar questa imagine tutto solingo e raccolto nell'angusta ed erma officina del suo sepolcro, con triduano studio si spremè tutto il sangue per esprimere il suo protratto [...]. Qui senz'uopo di mentitori pen[n]elli il sangue dipinse il sangue, le piaghe pinser le piaghe, le vene pinser le vene, l'ossa dipinser l'ossa, il cuore dipinse il cuore, tutto il corpo se stesso pinse, e tutti gli spiriti vitali uscirono dalle ferite per rendere spiritosa questa pittura'. Tesauro, *Panegirici*, vol. II, 37–38; see also Doglio, "'Grandezze e meraviglie' della Sindone" 23.

³⁵ See Scott J.B., "Seeing the Shroud: Guarini's Reliquary Chapel in Turin and the Ostension of a Dynastic Relic", *Art Bulletin* 77 (1995) 633–636.

Vision and the Mediation of Images

This exchange between viewer and viewed object facilitated by the ritual display of the Veronica and Shroud must also be considered in relation to their copies. The authority of the act of sight to forge awareness of Christ's presence in the Veronica and Shroud impacts the perception of their reproductions as particularly potent signifiers for absent originals. Besides, these artificial images effectively mediated the Eucharist's primary visual dilemma, which was that the host's miraculous transformation into the substance of Christ's body could not be witnessed through external visual means at the moment of consecration. By way of artistic representation artists could assert visual evidence for this otherwise invisible miracle.

The derivative paintings and prints presently discussed reveal different pictorial strategies that lay bare the visible manifestation of real presence. El Greco's paintings convey the face of Christ as a three-dimensional, almost hyper-realistic portrait whose representational features exist independently of the cloth's undulating surface. The portrait matches the description of Jesus in a famous letter then believed written by a fictitious Publius Lentulus, governor of Judea immediately before Pontius Pilate. This letter, which carried the authority of a true image, describes him as:

a man of average or moderate height, and very distinguished. He has an impressive appearance, so that those who look on him love and fear him. His hair is the colour of a ripe hazel-nut. It falls straight almost to the level of his ears; from there down it curls thickly and is rather more luxuriant, and this hangs down to his shoulders. In front his hair is parted in two, with the parting in the center in the Nazarene manner. His forehead is wide, smooth, and serene, and his face is without wrinkles or any marks. It is graced by a slightly reddish tinge, a faint colour. His nose and mouth are faultless. His beard is thick and like a young man's first beard, of the same colour as his hair; it is not particularly long and is parted in the middle. His aspect is simple and mature. His eyes are brilliant, mobile, clear, splendid.³⁷

El Greco evokes this canonical description in his paintings by featuring the dangling hazel-brown curls, the parted beard, and the bright, engaging eyes fixed beneath a broad forehead. In order to draw attention to the

³⁶ Chastel A., "La Véronique", *Revue de l'art* 40 (1978) 75. See also Dobschütz E. von, *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (Leipzig: 1899) 308**–330**.

³⁷ See Baxandall M., *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* (Oxford: 1972) 57. El Greco may have known the description as repeated in Hollanda Francisco de, *De la pintura antigua: Versión castellana de Manuel Denis* (1563) (Madrid: 1921) 91–92.

object's status as a Passion relic, these paintings also depict the crown of thorns pricking his skin and drawing droplets of blood – the very medium of the Veronica's printed image and the substance of the consecrated wine used for the Eucharist.³⁸ He deliberately avoided repeating the ghostly dissemblance that the act of pressing a cloth into the uneven contours of a human face would more likely yield.³⁹ This unexpected naturalism in the paintings underscores the physical presence of Christ's bodily matter in the actual cloth. El Greco's paintings thus display for their viewers an image that suggests more vividly what the Veronica embodies and holds captive. When viewing these images the worshipper comprehends the conception of the relic as both the representation and presence of Christ rendered through the image's extreme naturalism. El Greco translated the traces of blood as synecdochical referents into a portrait whose complete, coalesced likeness signals his total physical essence. In other words, what one sees in these paintings of the Veronica is a form of transubstantiation wrought through the process of their own making, the painterly equivalent of a miraculous infusion of physical matter that the viewer is unfortunately unable to witness in the host itself.

Giovanni Testa's 1578 ostension print of the Shroud of Turin differs from El Greco's paintings because it was mass-produced and then distributed to pilgrims who had come to view the relic. It also uses more nuanced representational strategies to allow the prototype to penetrate the artifice of its sign. Principally, it provides a particularly complex contrast to El Greco's naturalism, even as the stark flatness of the boldly outlined body departs from the faded elusiveness of the image on the actual Shroud, where Christ emerges faintly to our view as if partially submerged under the surface of the linen. The artist simplified and reversed what conforms on the actual Shroud to the properties of a photographic negative by turning Christ's prostrate body into a flattened positive image. But, while it is difficult to consider this print as a true reproduction, since it alters the medium, dimensions, and even form of the original itself, some of its features provide the viewer with the necessary data to engage in private devotion to the Shroud without having the relic itself present. These call

³⁸ For the use of the Veronica's image to emphasize its status as a Passion relic see Wolf G., "La Veronica e la tradizione romana di icone", in Gentile A. – Morel P. – Via C.C. (eds.), *Il ritratto e la memoria*, Materiali 2 (Rome: 1993) 17.

³⁹ See Stoichita V.I., Visionary Experience in the Golden Age of Spanish Art (London: 1995) 63–66.

into question the very nature of original, copy, and the representational qualities of both.

The title printed in two parallel bands running above and below the image of the Shroud's exhibition announces, 'Il verissimo ritratto del Santissimo Sudario del nostro Salvatore Giesu' ['The Most True Portrait of the Most Holy Shroud of Our Savior Jesus Christ']. This text complicates how the print operates as an icon because of the linguistic ambiguity of this address. The 'verissimo ritratto' seems, on the one hand, to negate the intermediary print and describe instead the absent Shroud of Turin, an object that conveys an unmediated true image because of the means by which it was produced. Yet, on the other hand, we might consider that the label 'Il verissimo ritratto del santissimo Sudario' could also be taken to mean that the printed image itself is a 'most true portrait' of Christ's burial cloth. It broadcasts the engraved image's own artifice – a representation and not the real thing. Giovanni Testa included his own signature within this band of text right underneath the word 'Christo' as a means of bolstering the authority of his artistic agency that brought the image into being.

Yet the claim for Giovanni Testa's 1578 print to be a 'most true' representation of the cloth relic itself resides in the features that ensure the visual proximity of the prototype that it portrays. First, the engraving reproduces the parallel rows of scorch marks flanking the images of Christ's body caused by a molten piece of the Shroud's casket dropping onto the corner of the folded cloth during a 1532 fire. As a result, viewers could not mistake this image, even despite its mediating artifice, with any other subject. Second, as a devotional aid, it permits the worshipper to conjure an accurate mental reconstruction or imaginary copy of the original. The image's upper border includes a tiny line of print alerting the viewer,

that from this A to B is the distance from head to head; from A to C is the length of the back; from A to C (three times) is the width of the Holy Sheet; B from A to C (four times) is the length of the image of Our Lord Jesus Christ; from A to C (nine times) is approximately the length of the Holy Shroud C^{40}

The bold-faced 'A', 'B', and 'C' inserted into the continuous line of text demarcate the points of measurement from which the beholder could

 $^{^{40}}$ 'È da sapere da questo A al B vi è la distanza da capo a capo, dal A al C la larghezza delle spalle, dal A al C $_3$ volte $_-$ la larghezza della Santa Tella, B dal A al C $_-$ 4 volte $_-$ la longhezza dell'immagine del N. $^\circ$ Sig.re Giesu Xpto dal A al C $_-$ 9 volte $_-$ in circa è longa la S.ta Tovaglia C'.

reconstruct the true dimensions of the cloth and its image, and, by extension, Christ's actual body as well: the distance from A to C is one-third the Shroud's width, one-ninth its length, and one-fourth the length of the body. As a scaled pictorial equivalent of the Shroud of Turin, this image operates as a surrogate that preserves in copy the sacred aura of the original. Since the worshipper could derive an accurate mental picture of the Shroud with correct dimensions of the linen based on information provided in print, the devotional function and value of this printed image is predicated first on the understanding that it displays the Holy Shroud specifically, and, consequently, on the implicit elision of sign and signified. Testa's print thus functions simultaneously as a copy and as an extension of the original.

Ultimately the formal features of these pictures of St. Veronica's veil and the Shroud of Turin ensured that they achieve a common goal of guiding the beholder to use both a bodily form of experiential vision and a more spiritual form of contemplative vision. They thus provide evidence for how this form of worship in turn incorporates images into devotional practices – and by consequence document the prestige then accorded to the sense of sight. Artistic depictions of the act of exhibiting these Eucharistic icon-relics provide their respective viewers with a visually stimulating devotional experience. We can place the act of display of the Veronica and Shroud, as well as the production of their copies, into practices of private piety that required a plurality of visual modes – something along the lines of Augustine's classification of vision into corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual forms.⁴¹ Artificial representations can be used to stimulate a duplicate form of a singular visual encounter with the actual objects themselves, a devotional exchange predicated on the Aristotelian imageforming process which states that our sense experience stores memory impressions that allow us to re-animate those experiences in our imagination. Though El Greco's paintings do not show the official exhibition itself of the Veronica, he does show the image in the act of being presented, either held aloft by its owner or nailed to a board. His paintings could be used in conjunction with the various texts that were produced after the Jubilee that document the event concerning the image's display. The naturalistic depiction of Christ's face signals the real presence of his bodily

⁴¹ For a discussion of Augustinian vision as it relates to devotional images, see Ringbom S., "Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions: Notes on the Place of Art in Late Medieval Private Piety", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 73 (1969) 162.

matter that became the primary devotional appeal of the original cloth. Giovanni Testa similarly inserts the representation of the Shroud into a visual narrative of its display, while at the same time providing the necessary data for a mental construction of the original whose likeness his print bears. These images thus stimulated memories of the event for those that were there, or provided a surrogate experience of viewing for others who had no direct memory. In both cases, worshippers were provided with an icon through which they could view with both bodily and spiritual eyes the real presence of Jesus Christ.

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'IN SENSUS CADENTEM IMAGINEM': VARIETIES OF THE SPIRITUAL IMAGE IN THEODOOR GALLE'S LIFE OF BLESSED FATHER IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA OF 1610

Walter S. Melion

Meditative treatises and spiritual biographies provide a rich if largely untapped source of image theory that marshals criteria for distinguishing varieties of the spiritual image. Such images were seen to be spiritual in cause and effect: inspired by the Holy Spirit, they act upon the exterior and interior senses, ultimately mobilizing the higher faculties of memory, reason, and volition; they transform these faculties by enlisting them as instruments of *reformatio*, spiritual self-reformation, that consists in the soul's conversion, its turning toward God. This experience of con*versio* alters one's species of composition by restoring the soul's likeness to Christ, in whose image it strives to be perfected. The representational properties of spiritual images, what they portray to the oculi mentis (eyes of the mind) and the nature of their efficacy, constitute principal themes in one of the crucial monuments of early Jesuit hagiography, the Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu fundatoris (Life of Blessed Father Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Society of Jesus), first published in 1610 by Theodoor Galle of Antwerp, at the behest of Pedro de Ribadeneyra, Ignatius's official biographer [Fig. 1]. Composed of sixteen magnificently engraved large oblong plates, the Vita Ignatii Loyolae illustrates key episodes from Ribadeneyra's Latin biography of Ignatius, adapted from the

¹ Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu fundatoris ad vivum expressa ex ea quam P. Petrus Ribadeneyra eiusdem Societatis theologus ad Dei gloriam et piorum hominum usum ac utilitatem olim scripsit; deinde Madriti pingi, postea in aes incidi et nunc demum typis excudi curavit (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). The book is printed in the quarto oblong format. Plates 1 and 4 are inscribed 'Theodorus Galleus fecit et excudit' and 'C. de Malhery fecit et ex.' respectively. It seems likely that Theodoor Galle published the series, perhaps with the assistance of Carel de Mallery and his brother Cornelis Galle I, both of whom were eminent engravers. On the series and the circumstances of its production, see König-Nordhoff U., Ignatius von Loyola: Studien zur Entwicklung einer neuen Heiligen-Ikonographie im Rahmen einer Kanonisationskampagne um 1600 (Berlin: 1982) 261–270; and Melion W.S., "Pedro de Ribadeneira S.J., Vita beati/sancti patris Ignatii Loyolae (1610/n.d.)", in Begheyn P. – Deprez B. – Faesen R. – Kenis L. (eds.), Jesuit Books in the Low Countries 1540–1773: A Selection from the Maurits Sabbe Library (Leuven: 2009) 12–17.



Fig. 1. Cornelis Galle (engraver), Title-Page to Petrus Ribadeneyra, *Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu* (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 200×140 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.

Spanish edition of 1583, issued in 1586 (Madrid), and then frequently thereafter (Antwerp: 1587, Rome: 1589, Ingolstadt: 1590, Lyons: 1595, and Cologne: 1602), as part of the campaign that led to canonization in 1622 [Figs. 1–16]. The print series cleaves closely to subtle distinctions made by Ribadeneyra amongst the kinds and degrees of sacred image that Ignatius beheld as he progressed in sanctity. Within the prosopography that he codified, the form and function of such imagines, and the manner and meaning of their viewing, constitute the chief markers of the Jesuit vocation as defined by the founder's life: this is why their status as objects of beholding prove so important to the argument of the textual and even more of the pictorial Life. In this essay, I examine the relation between the two Vitae, showing how Galle attempted to describe and particularize the types of spiritual image set forth by Ribadeneyra. After defining more precisely the kind of book Galle designed and its chief pictorial source, I discuss Ribadeneyra's conception of the spiritual image, enumerate the depicted episodes in which Ignatius figures as a user of spiritual imagery, and then expound the image theory implicit in selected scenes. The essay closes with an excursus on the fons et origo of Ribadeneyra's conception



Fig. 2. Theodoor Galle (engraver and publisher), Vision of Saint Peter at Loyola and Other Scenes, plate 1 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 202 × 140 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 3. Cornelis Galle (engraver), *Ignatius Gives His Clothes to a Beggar, Prays before* the Effigy of the Virgin at Montserrat, and Other Scenes, plate 2 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris *Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu* (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 202 × 145 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 4. Adriaen Collaert (engraver), Ignatius in a Death-Like Sleep at Manresa, Ignatius Divinely Illuminated, and Other Scenes, plate 3 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 199 \times 145 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 5. Carel de Mallery (engraver and publisher), Visions of the Trinity and of the Verum Corpus in the Dominican Church at Manresa, plate 4 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 205 × 145 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 6. Cornelis Galle (engraver), Christ Appears to Ignatius on the Road to Padua and Other Scenes, plate 5 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 202×146 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 7. Theodoor Galle (engraver), Vision of Christ at Jerusalem and Other Scenes, plate 6 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 202 \times 146 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 8. Adriaen Collaert (engraver), Ignatius Is Beaten by Lascivious Youths at Barcelona, Listens Intently to a Sermon, Is Seen to Levitate, and Other Scenes, plate 7 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 202 \times 145 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 9. Carel de Mallery (engraver), Ignatius and His Nine Associates Take Communion at Paris, Vowing to Devote Themselves to the Salvation of Souls, Ignatius Willingly Exposes Himself to Unjust Punishment at the University of Paris, and Other Scenes, plate 8 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 205 × 146 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 10. Adriaen Collaert (engraver), *Ignatius Takes up His Apostolic Vocation at Azpeitia, Begging for Alms, Refusing His Brother's Hospitality, Preaching in the Open Air, and Healing the Withered Arm of a Washerwoman,* plate 9 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, *Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu* (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 202 × 146 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 11. Cornelis Galle (engraver), Vision at La Storta and Ignatius Recounting the Vision to His Associates on the Way to Rome, plate 10 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 202 × 146 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 12. Carel de Mallery (engraver), Pope Paul III Confirms the New Order, Ignatius Composes its Rule and Constitutions, and Sends Forth its Members to Preach the Gospel, plate 11 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 205×146 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.

of *spiritus* as an imaging faculty, Augustine's great treatise *De Genesi ad litteram* (*On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*), Book 12 of which explores the relation amongst corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual vision. Ribadeneyra would likely have consulted the approved Louvain edition of 1576.

Commissioned by the Jesuit historian Ribadeneyra, the *Life of Blessed Father Ignatius of Loyola* comprises a title-page and fifteen plates chronicling pivotal events demonstrative of his saintliness [Figs. 1–16]. As the title makes clear, the engravings derive from two primary sources: Ribadeneyra's Latin *Vita* and the painted series by Juan de Mesa (ca. 1600), based on the Spanish *Vida*, that Ribadeneyra had himself ordered for the Jesuit College in Madrid.² The print series fully accords with the stated

² Issued in a small print-run, Ribadeneyra's first biography of Ignatius, the *Vita Ignatii Loyolae* of 1572, circulated mainly within the order, whereas the *Vida del P. Ignacio de Loyola* of 1583, printed with the express approval of Father General Claudio Aquaviva, was intended for a wider readership. Ribadeneyra himself composed the Latin translation of 1586. On the *Vita Ignatii Loyolae* of 1572 and its various editions, including the decimosexto issued by Christopher Plantin in 1589, see Backer A. de – Sommervogel C. (eds.), *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 11 vols. (Brussels – Paris: 1890–1932), vol. VI,

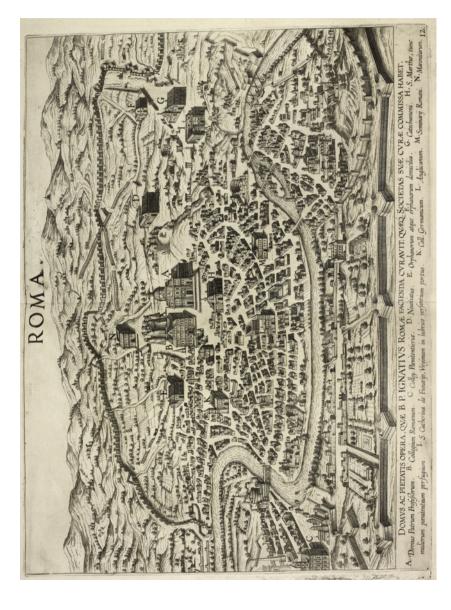


Fig. 13. Joannes Collaert, Map of Rome with the Gesù, Professed and Novitiate Houses, Collegium Romanum, and Other Jesuit Foundations, plate 12 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis lesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 201 \times 148 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 14. Carel de Mallery (engraver), Death of Ignatius, Ignatius Receives a Plenary Indulgence from the Pope, and Ignatius Appears to Margaret Dellio in Bologna, plate 13 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 205 \times 146 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 15. Adriaen Collaert (engraver), Obsequies of Ignatius, Miracles of the Handkerchief and Angelic Music, plate 14 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 201 × 145 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.



Fig. 16. Joannes Collaert (engraver), *Miracles of Ignatius*, plate 15 to Petrus Ribadeneyra, *Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae religionis Societatis Iesu* (Antwerp, Theodoor Galle: 1610). Engraving, 201 × 147 mm. Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek.

intention of Ribadeneyra's *Vita*, which is, as he avows in the Prologue, to set Ignatius before the reader's eyes ('ante oculos ponunt'), so that he may be closely imitated, and more than this, recognized as the exemplary antitype whose excellence reveals how we, his mere types, may best strive after the virtues he has perfectly practised.³ Like the textual *Vita*,

cols. 1725–1726. On the *Vida del P. Ignacio de Loyola* of 1583 and its various editions, including the translations into Latin by Ribadeneyra and into Flemish by Jan David, see ibid. vol. VI, cols. 1726–1731. De Backer and Sommervogel describe only the later edition of the engraved *Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae*, issued ca. 1622 to mark the founder's canonization, and as such, with the term *beati* changed to *sancti*; see ibid. vol. VI, cols. 1730–1731 and vol. XI, col. 1486, no. 18. On Ribadeneyra as Ignatius's biographer and the control he exerted over the founder's iconography, see König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola* 42–66; on the Mesa cycle, 60–62. On Ribadeneyra's *Vita Ignatii Loyolae* of 1572 and *Vida* of 1583, see O'Malley J.W., "The Many Lives of Ignatius of Loyola, Future Saint", in O'Malley (ed.) – Walsh J.P.M. (trans.), *Constructing a Saint through Images: The 1609 Illustrated Biography of Ignatius of Loyola* (Philadelphia: 2008) 11–22.

³ Dalmases C. de (ed.), Vita Ignatii Loyolae auctore Petro de Ribadeneyra, in Dalmases (ed.), Fontes narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola et de Societatis Iesu initiis, 4 vols., Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu 93 (Rome: 1965), vol. IV, 66: 'Atque haec quidem ratio, fratres, cum ceteris nobis communis est; illa praecipua, ut quem ducem sequimur, eius quoque virtutem imitemur. Ut enim illustrium familiarum alumni, suos quique duces sibi ante oculos ponunt, ut ad eorum normam, vitam omnem suam et actiones dirigant; sic nos

which records what the author has seen and heard ('quae nos ipsi, aut in Ignatio vidimus, aut ex ipso aliquando audivimus'), the engraved *Life* depicts Ignatius *ad vivum*, describing the words, deeds, face, and feelings that his biographer claims to have observed ('eiusque dicta, facta, vultum, motus observarem'). And again like its source, the *Life* also reveals interior things about Ignatius, hidden aspects of him that Ribadeneyra has likewise discerned ('non solum exteriora et aperta [...] verum etiam interiora et recondita quaedam Ignatii').⁴ The pictorial life achieves this aim by bringing to light facets of his interior life, especially his powers of spiritual vision.

Prefaced by a Latin title-page and embellished with Latin captions, the engraved series harmonizes Ribadeneyra's text of 1586 to Mesa's pictorial inventions.⁵ The engraver-publisher Theodoor Galle, collaborating with his brother Cornelis I, condensed Mesa's sixteen paintings (all of which are now lost) into thirteen plates (1–11, 13–14), adding two additional images: a map of Rome with all the Jesuit houses – professed, collegiate, novitiate, penitential, catechetic, and charitable – clearly marked (12) [Fig. 13]; and a closing summa of Ignatian miracles and miraculous relics, portrayed in the form of nine framed votive plaques recording the wonders he performed during his life, as well as confirming his intercessory potency (15) [Fig. 16]. Galle assembled a team of skilled engravers, three of whom (Adriaen and Joannes Collaert and Carel de Mallery) had previously executed plates for that nonpareil of Jesuit publications, Jerónimo Nadal's meditative treatise, the *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels* (1595).⁶ The engravers

Ignatium, ducem nobis divinitus datum, et sacrae militiae nostrae antesignanum et principem proponere nobis debemus, et eminentem illius omnium virtutum formam, moribus si minus exprimere, certe quoad possumus adumbrare'.

⁴ Dalmases (ed.), *Vita İgnatii Loyolae auctore Petro de Ribadeneyra* 68: 'Et quoniam historiae prima lex veritas est, hoc in primis profiteor, me nihil inexplorati scripturum; sed res mihi notas, certas testatasque literis proditurum. Ea enim in medium afferemus, quae nos ipsi, aut in Ignatio vidimus, aut ex ipso aliquando audivimus. [...] sed domi, foris, omnibus in rebus illi praesto essem, eiusque dicta, facta, vultum, motus observarem, magno certe cum animi fructu, magna cum admiratione. Quae quidem tanto in me quotidie magis augebatur, quanto et Ignatii virtus in singulos dies magis enitebat, et mihi eius splendorem, aetate progrediente, perspicere magis licebat. Propter hanc igitur diuturnam consuetudinem et familiaritatem, non solum exteriora et aperta cum multis, verum etiam interiora et recondita quaedam Ignatii cum paucis, ex ipso saepe cognovimus'.

⁵ On the translation of Mesa's paintings into prints, see König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola* 261–265, 270–271.

⁶ On Nadal's Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia, see Melion W.S., "The Art of Vision in Jerome Nadal's Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia", in Homann F.A. (ed. and trans.), Jerome Nadal, Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels I: The Infancy Narratives (Philadelphia: 2003) 1–96.

probably worked from reduced and reversed drawings of Mesa's originals, harmonizing their styles to enhance the series' integration. Issued the year after Ignatius's beatification on July 27, 1609, the first edition of 1610 commemorates the founder's elevation to the status of *beatus*, whereas the second edition of ca. 1622 celebrates his recent canonization on March 12, 1622.

Unlike Mesa's cycle, painted for the sole use of Jesuit scholastics, the engraved Life was printed in relatively large quantities for wide circulation, as the worn impressions of 1622 suggest. Along with other pictorial evidentiae (proofs) likewise commissioned by Ribadeneyra – a portrait icon by the Spanish court painter Alonso Sánchez Coello (1585), an elaborate portrait print by Pierre Perret (1597), and the Mesa series - the Life fully upholds the arguments for sainthood put forward in his Vita and Flos Sanctorum (1599–1601), a popular compilation of saints' lives, volume two of which ends with a chapter on Ignatius.⁷ The *Life* borrows the didactic format codified by Nadal in the *Annotations and Meditations*, employing lettered narrative inscriptions composed in plain and simple Latin, that identify the main and subsidiary scenes, likewise lettered, into which the prints after Mesa are organized. The letters establish the viewing sequence, while pictorial scale is used to set the theme: a large foreground scene generally predominates, with smaller background scenes functioning as thematic supplements. As Ursula König-Nordhoff has shown, the three prints (7-9) made up of two equivalent foreground scenes, were probably assembled from the six smaller vertical pictures interpolated into the sequence of otherwise horizontal canvases [Figs. 8–10].8 The inscriptions refer the viewer to relevant passages in the Vita and Flos sanctorum, that in concert point to the topical and thematic, rather than simply chronological or topological, organization of the pictures. The map certifying the order's miraculous expansion and institutional scope (12), along with the closing miracles-plate that functions like a votive peroration (15), has its source in the *Flos*, which comprehensively enumerates Ignatian miracles, explicitly arguing the case for canonization, and differing from the *Vita* in this respect [Figs. 13 & 16].

⁷ On the Coello portrait, see König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola* 57–59; on the Perret portrait, 59–60. On the *Flos Sanctorum*, *o Libro de las vidas de los Santos*, issued in two volumes between 1599 and 1601, and on its various editions, see Backer – Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, vol. VI, cols. 1737–1740.

⁸ König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola* 62.

Engraved and possibly invented by Cornelis Galle, the title-print depicts Ignatius as he appears in the Cappellette Portrait, a famous cult image associated with his burial site [Fig. 1]. The series thus brings together the two most famous portraits of Ignatius - Coello's as adapted by Mesa and the Cappellete, the former revered as a living likeness, the latter venerated for its connection to an incipient cult (the sine qua non for any process of canonization). Ignatius holds an open book, its pages inscribed with two admonitory texts distilling his conception of the Jesuit rule: at left, we are instructed to devote ourselves not merely to perfecting our souls, but also to saving the souls of our fellow men for the greater glory of God ('ad maiorem Dei gloriam'); at right, we are told that whosoever enlists in the army of Christ must gird up his loins, labouring day and night to redeem the debt owed to God ('ad tam grandis debiti solutionem'). In the series, Ignatius's every action fulfills one or both of these injunctions that sum up the raison d'être of the order he established by the grace of God. For Ribadeneyra, this was his greatest accomplishment, fit to be construed as the founder's chief miracle. The spiritual images he is divinely given to receive, reconcile both aspects of the vocation he exemplifies: on the one hand they usually occur during the performance of penitential spiritual exercises, when he does his utmost to perfect himself (1, 3, 4, 10) [Figs. 2, 4, 5, & 11]; on the other, they inspire his efforts to convey the insights gained, enshrine them in the Exercitia spiritualia, constitute the new order, and codify its institutions, all this in service to God and humankind (2, 4, 10, 11) [Figs. 3, 5, 11, & 12].

Ribadeneyra affirms the power of spiritual images to produce active effects of this kind, in his account of the prayerful origin of the *Constitutiones*, the rules and regulations defining the order's institutional character (Bk. 4, ch. 2). Drafted by Ignatius as a direct result of the divine *illustrationes* (revelations) with which his meditative prayers were daily rewarded, these statutes originate in his keen awareness of the divine will and fervent desire to comply with it. In proof, Ribadeneyra adduces the daybook Ignatius kept while writing the *Constitutiones*, to arouse reflection and recollection ('memoriae et deliberationis causa'): here, for example, one finds described the ever-present benefits and revelations ('assidua Dei beneficia illustrationesque eas') he experienced continuously over forty days, as he weighed the vow of poverty, asking himself whether churches

⁹ On the Cappelette portrait, see ibid. 235–236.

of professed houses require fixed revenues.¹⁰ Whatever the question at issue, howsoever minor, he never ceased to pray assiduously, dwelling at the same time on higher matters. Images were one of two ways his prayers were answered:

In that [daybook] may be seen his great concern for the examination of himself and of conscience, the intensity and precision of his prayer, the abundance of his tears, almost continuous in their effusion; and also, with what frequency and magnitude consolation poured forth into his body, and how his spirit was constrained, how unable to speak, his voice stuck fast, and how the arteries of his whole body were, as they say, sensibly shaken. Therein is seen with what continual and extraordinary revelations his mind was imbued – of the Most Holy Trinity, of the divine essence, of the approach, quality, and operation of the divine persons; and of that most sacred mystery, he was taught, now by secret intelligences ('occultis intelligentiis'), now by external images ('externis imaginibus'). And nor were those revelations at all fleeting; but rather, at times extended and long-lasting, and of such kind as attended him at bed, table, home, and abroad, and consumed him by a sort of ample flame.¹¹

The terms *occultis intelligentiis* and *externis imaginibus* refer to the two instruments of revelation that confer knowledge of divine mysteries throughout the *Vita*. Whereas the former appeals directly to the intellectual faculties and operates outside the realm of sensory experience, the latter communicates to the mind's eye by means of spiritual images that are yet experienced as if they were perceptible, which is to say, mimetic and representational. Spiritual images, in other words, share many of the properties of the pictorial image: this is what licenses Ribadeneyra's attention to the kinds and degrees of spiritual image that Ignatius is seen variously to behold.

In fact, the passage from Book 4, chapter 2 is retrospective: Ribadeneyra is alluding to the full spectrum of spiritual images that Ignatius has been privileged to apprehend since his conversion at Pamplona, in particular

¹⁰ Dalmases (ed.), Vita Ignatii Loyolae auctore Petro de Ribadeneyra 610.

¹¹ Ibid. 612: În eo videre est, illi quanta fuerit sui examinandi et conscientiae perscrutandae cura, quam incensa et accurata oratio, quanta lacrymarum et continua pene effusio; quam saepe consolationis magnitudo redundaret etiam in corpus, et vox intercluso spiritu haereret ac fari non posset, et totius corporis venae, sensibiliter (ut ita dicam) commoverentur. Illic cernitur, quam assidui eius mens atque eximiis de Sanctissima Trinitate illustrationibus impleretur, de divina essentia, de processione, de proprietate divinarum personarum et operatione; deque sacratissimo illo mysterio, tum occultis intelligentiis, tum externis doceretur imaginibus. Neque vero breves illae erant aut fugaces; sed prolixae interdum ac diuturnae, et quae in cubiculo, in mensa, domi, foris illum comitarentur, et suae magnitudinis aestu quodam absorberent'.

to his insight into the Holy Trinity at Manresa, and vision of the same at La Storta, but also to his many experiences of Christ, second person of the Trinity, whose 'essence, approach, quality, and operation' he discerns at Pamplona, Manresa, and Jerusalem. Galle pays close attention to these encounters with images, the precise nature of which he attempts to make apparent in five of the fifteen plates. Plate 1, engraved by Theodoor Galle, brings together three scenes of conversion: his body restored to health by the apparition of St. Peter at Loyola (A), and his spirit revitalized by reading the lives of Christ and the saints, Ignatius kneels before an image of Our Lady (B), pleading for her intercession and thereby offering himself as a soldier and servant of Christ [Fig. 2].¹² Soon after, the Virgin and Child appear to him (C), allaying his fear of the sins of the flesh, and granting him the gift of lifelong chastity. Plate 3, engraved by Adriaen Collaert, recounts the heroic acts of self-mortification at Manresa, that procure further divine gifts: he chooses to live as a mendicant, combatting the devil through a life of poverty (A); bereaved of his bodily senses, his spirit enraptured, he lies as if dead for eight days, his beating heart alone giving evidence of life (B); elevated in contemplation, he sits by a river and casts his bodily eyes upon the water, while illuminated by heaven, his cognition of the arts and sciences expands, and his soul, unaided by sensible shapes or figures, ascertains the mysteries of faith (C); kneeling at a wayside cross, his discretion of spirits divinely fortified, he abjures the counterfeit vision of a radiant serpent (D) [Fig. 4]. 13 Plate 4, engraved by Carel de Mallery, develops the theme of Ignatius's visual consolations: in the church of Our Lady at Manresa, he recites the Office of the Blessed Virgin and is endued to see, as if exteriorly signified in a figurative image, what interiorly he comes fully to perceive and understand about the Holy Trinity (A); at Mass he sees with the eyes of his soul how the Eucharistic bread veils the real presence of Christ (B); inspired by these kinds and degrees of spiritual image, he writes the Spiritual Exercises, as well as a book on the Trinity

¹² Plate 1 inscribed: 'A. Ignatio graviter saucio S. Petrus apparet, eique sanitatem restituit. Lib. p. eiusdem vit. c. 1. B. Victis demum tentationibus daemonum, Christo se militaturum spondet. Lib. p. c. 2. C. Nocte quadam oranti Beatissima Virgo Maria apparet, donumque castitatis consequitur. Lib. p. c. 2.'.

¹³ Plate 3 inscribed: 'A. Minoresae cum mendicis in hospitali domo habitat, et familiariter versatur. Lib. p. c. 3. B. Octo ipsos dies a sensibus alienus, extra se omnino ac mortuo similis, iacet. Lib. p. c. 7. C. Ad ripam fluminis divinitus illustratur. Lib. p. c. 7. D. Ante crucem procumbens et orans, daemonis fraudes agnoscit. Lib. p. c. 7.'.

(C) [Fig. 5].¹⁴ Plate 5, engraved by Cornelis Galle, shows how resolutely he embraces the solitary life of a pilgrim, relying solely on God for companionship: weakened by many hardships, having collapsed on the road to Padua, he is reassured by Christ, who renews his strength and prophesies his future suffering (A); in Venice, he is sought out by a senator, whom God has sent to succour him, but whose ministrations he refuses (B); deathly ill and recently purged, he yet sets sail for Jerusalem. (C) [Fig. 6]. 15 Plate 6, engraved by Theodoor Galle, follows him as he retraces the way of the Cross, visiting various loca sancta in Jerusalem and thereby confirming himself in the imitation of Christ: he arrives in Jerusalem and goes to see the holy sights (A); he returns on his own to Mount Olivet, where he beholds the footprints of Christ (B); roughly treated by the guard sent to retrieve him, he is consoled by the Saviour, who walks with and comforts him (C); having boarded the least seaworthy vessel, he yet returns safely to Venice (D) [Fig. 7]. 16 Plate 10, engraved by Cornelis Galle, illustrates the famous vision at La Storta, which resulted in the order's being named after Jesus: God the Father presents Ignatius to Christ bearing the Cross, who in turn pledges his gracious support in Rome (A); Ignatius then hastens to reassure his companions, Pierre Lefèvre and Diego Lainez (B) [Fig. 11].¹⁷

In order better to understand how the engraved *Life* discriminates amongst spiritual images, let us briefly examine two scenes focussing on the alternative mode of divine *illustratio*. Plate 11 portrays Paul III confirming the order (A), Ignatius composing its rule and constitutions (B), and its members going forth on worldwide missions (C) [Fig. 12].¹⁸ Scene B

¹⁴ Plate 4 inscribed: 'A. Mysterium Sanctissimae Trinitatis Ignatio revelatur. Lib. 1. c. 7. B. In Missa dum hostia elevatur Christum Dominum Nostrum videt. Lib. 1. c. 7. C. S.ma Trinitate librum scribit, librum item exercitiorum spiritualium. Lib. 1. c. 7.'.

¹⁵ Plate 5 inscribed: 'A. Iacentem in via prae imbecillitate, socij deserunt, et Christus dominus ei apparet. Lib. 1. c. 10. B. Venetijs in platea D. Marci dormientem Senator quidam Dei monitu conquirit, et domum suam ducit. Lib. p. c. 10. C. Morbo oppressus, ac pharmaco sumpto, navem Hierosolymam navigaturus conscendit. Lib. p. c. 10.'.

¹⁶ Plate 6 inscribed: 'A. Hierosolymam appellit, et sancta loca invisit. Lib. 1. c. 11. B. Solus in montem Olivetum revertitur. Lib. 1. c. 11. C. Male propter eam causam accipitur, sed Christus illum sua praesentia consolatur. Lib. 1. c. 11. D. Parvo navigio Venetias redit, submersis magnis sociorum navibus. Lib. 1. c. 11.'.

¹⁷ Plate 10 inscribed: 'Romam proficiscenti ad instituendam Societatem Pater aeternus apparet, eumque filio suo commendat, Filius vero se ei propitium Romae fore promittit. Lib. 2. c. 11. B. Ex oratione surgens ad socios revertitur, atque illis quae a Domino acceperat, narrat Lib. 2. c. 11.'.

¹⁸ Plate 11 inscribed: 'A. Paulus Tertius. Pontifex Maximus, anno salutis 1540, Societatem Iesu confirmat. Lib. 2. c. 17. B. Constitutiones ac regulam S. Pater scribit. Lib. 4. c. 2. C. Filios suos ad praedicandum evangelium in varias mundi plagas dimittit. Lib. 3.'.

thus illustrates the passage from Book 4, chapter 2, cited above: it shows how Ignatius, alone in his study, receives the divine intelligences that lead him to consolidate his order, securing it as an instrument for the renewal and propagation of the faith. Here as elsewhere in the series, the relation between the principal and corollary scenes is one of analogy: as Paul III blesses Ignatius and his followers, so God sanctifies the Jesuit constitutions; and as the Pope officially constitutes the order, so Ignatius makes firm its institutions, ensuring its worldwide diffusion. The beams of heavenly light flooding into the darkened chamber and homing in on his head signify abstractly without recourse to representational images the plenitude of divine inspiration ('divinae erga illum largitatis plenitudo') pervading his faculty of intelligentia.¹⁹ The parallel diagonals connecting Paul to Ignatius, caelum to cubiculum, and the complementary diagonal that reverses direction, connecting the order's missionaries to the world beyond Rome, underscore the themes of consecration and transmission that unify the three scenes and justify their gathering.

The same device of abstracted rays likewise denotes divine illumination in plate 3, scene C, where it stands for the mind's opening, not to sensory images, but to *illustrationes* made available through aniconic contemplation [Fig. 4]. Ribadeneyra emphasizes that these revelations, howsoever transcendent, complement rather than foreclose those received through external images, for Ignatius, having been thoroughly transfixed, is then moved to kneel before the image of the Cross, there to offer thanks to the Lord:

Having gone one day to a church about a mile from Manresa, he sat down for a while by the roadside, lost in contemplation of divine matters, his face turned toward the river flowing nearby. There the eyes of his mind ('mentis ei oculi') were opened and illumined, not that he might see the likeness of something or an image perceptible to sense ('non ita quidem ut speciem aliquam aut in sensus cadentem imaginem videret'), but rather, might understand very many things pertaining to the mysteries of faith and to the acquisition of knowledge [of the arts and sciences], with such exceptional clarity that these selfsame [divine] matters became discernible in a certain new light ('res ipsae novo quodam lumine cernerentur'). So copious and excellent was this illumination of the mind, that Ignatius himself [later] denied that any revelation or divine assistance he had received during his sixty-two years of life could be compared to it; and whatsoever he had

¹⁹ Bk. 4, ch. 2, in Dalmases (ed.), *Vita Ignatii Loyolae auctore Petro de Ribadeneyra* 610: 'Quo ex scripto plane perspicitur Ignatii virtus et divinae erga illum largitatis plenitudo, pondusque ipsarum Constitutionum et autoritas'.

learned subsequently, either by study, labour, or divine illumination, was less than that which he received then. After this event had transfixed and held him fast, he knelt down before a cross close at hand, offering thanks to God Most High for this great benefit. 20

As in plate 11, divine and natural light behave differently, streaming in from opposite directions, but whereas at Rome Ignatius looks into the light, at Manresa his face and hand are shadowed, to indicate that the river beside him is seen and not seen, occluded by the brighter heavenly glory suffusing his gaze [Figs. 4 & 12]. Ignatius also appears in scene A at left, this time entirely lit by natural light: he points once more, though his gesture is reversed, and he looks intently into the eyes of a sick, poor man, signalling his resolve to live with the inmates of the local hospital and minister to their needs. Scenes A and C, therefore, bear witness to the two sides of the Jesuit vocation, active and contemplative, as exemplified by Ignatius. The middle scene B, on the other hand, functions like the fulcrum around which these two scenes pivot: having fallen into a deathlike state of ecstasy at compline, he is indeed taken for dead and mourned until his companions detect a weak pulse. As Ribadeneyra tacitly reveals, the name of Jesus, uttered by Ignatius immediately upon waking, demonstrates his total identification with the sacrificial death of Christ, a point further made pictorially by the similarity of scene B to a Lamentation.²¹ Plate 3, then, is a triptych, comprising a scene of sensory deprivation, flanked by scenes of ocular engagement and of disengagement, that stand respectively for public ministry and solitary devotion [Fig. 4].

²⁰ Bk. 1, ch. 7, in ibid. 126: 'Egressus die quodam Manresa ad templum, quod ab oppido mille passibus abest, divinarum rerum contemplatione suspensus, paululum consedit in via, quam fluvius praeterlabitur, faciemque convertit ad flumen. Ibi mentis ei oculi aperti atque illuminati sunt, non ita quidem ut speciem aliquam aut in sensus cadentem imaginem videret, sed ut permulta, tum quae ad fidei mysteria pertinent, tum quae ad scientiarum cognitionem optime intelligeret tanta tamque clara luce, ut ab eo res ipsae novo quodam lumine cernerentur. Porro haec mentis illustratio, usque adeo copiosa fuit atque excellens, ut ipsemet Ignatius negaret reliquas omnes illuminationes atque divina adiumenta, quae per totam vitam ad annum 62 aetatis suae a Deo accepisset, in unum coacervata, cum hac una posse conferri; seque quidquid alias, vel studio, vel labore, vel supernaturali lumine didicisset minus esse, quam quantum tunc quidem accepit. Quae res, cum fixum hominem haerentemque diu tenuisset, ad crucem, quae iuxta erat, genuflexo procubuit, ut Deo Opt. Max. pro hoc tanto beneficio gratias ageret'.

²¹ Ibid. 128: 'Mansit autem in hac ecstasi sive abstractione a sensibus, ad alterum usque diem sabbathi sequentis hebdomadae, quo die, hora Completorii, quasi e somno excitatus, multis, qui eum observabant, praesentibus, oculos aperuit, sacratissimum IESU nomen ingeminans'.

The revelations Ribadeneyra takes such pains accurately to describe may best be characterized as aniconic (non-representational) rather than imageless, since he later designates them 'sights of this kind' ('huiusmodi visis'), clearly stating that they were neither sensory ('non [...] in sensus cadentem imaginem') nor indiscernible to the mind's eye ('mentis ei oculi aperti atque illuminati sunt').²² In the *Life of Blessed Father Ignatius* of Lovola, rays emanating from a heavenly, non-figural source, such as the brilliance engirt by shadowy clouds, signify this sort of non-sensory image, the sight of which begets knowledge and understanding without recourse to mimetic referents. Two other kinds of image, antipodes to the non-sensory image, and as such, visibly representational, occur in scene D, above and behind scene C. This scene depicts two episodes simultaneously: Ignatius kneels before a cross where he gives thanks for his recent incomparable *illustrationes*; just before his riverside illumination, he prays at the same cross and realizes that the comely image of a radiant serpent, the sight of which had often presented itself to his bodily eyes ('sese illi clara luce pulchra quaedam species obiceret'), is truly neither splendid nor beautiful, but on the contrary, a demonic counterfeit ('non ea esse pulchritudine atque splendore [...] aperte cognovit illum esse daemonem'). This apparition, all form and no substance, exhibits and yet conceals itself: its visible presence delights as much as its absence aggrieves ('quantum aspectu recreari videbatur, tantundem ex discessu doloris [...] sentiebat'), but its seemingly serpentine form ('serpentis nonnullam formam') eludes all definition, obscuring what it is and wherefrom ('non satis discernere poterat, aut quid esset, ex quo esset'). Resplendent but unknowable, its body shining with the semblance of multiple eyes ('multis quasi oculis resplendens'), the falseness of this serpent is finally exposed when its indeterminate form is juxtaposed to the image of the Cross.²³ As scene D makes apparent, the rectitude of the latter discloses the deformation of the former, its abjectly twisted shape, now laid bare, causing Ignatius to discern its true nature and turn his back dismissively ('sed aspectu deformis et abiectus [...] facile illum ab se abigeret').24 In addition, the serpentine form of the demonic image contrasts with the unbending rays

²² Ibid. 126: 'Ante vero quam huiusmodi visis illuminaretur $[\ldots]$ '.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid. 128: 'Hoc igitur visum saepissime ipsi ante oculos versatum, nunquam tamen cognitum, illi se ad crucem istam iacenti rursus obiecit; sed divino iam lumine plenus et ante crucem procumbens, facile perspexit rem illam non ea esse pulchritudine atque splendore, quo se illi antea offerebat, aperteque cognovit illum esse daemonem'.

of divine light in scene C, thus driving home the disparity between the non-sensory image and its entirely sensory, deceptive counterpart, whose form ('forma') and shape ('species') engage the eyes ('ipsi ante oculos versatum') but impede cognition ('nunquam tamen cognitum'). The proximity of rays, cross, and serpent illustrates Ribadeneyra's point that the combination of divine illumination ('divino iam lumine plenus') and perspicuous cross ('ad crucem istam') is what ultimately enabled Ignatius to see through and reject the meretricious image sent to seduce him ('facile perspexit rem illam').²⁵

For Ribadeneyra, the distinction between the false image of the serpent and true image of the Cross signals a further distinction to be made between two modes of response to Ignatius's sanctity, the one based in sense, the other also in spirit. There are those, he says, who rely entirely upon the sensations of the body ('omnes voluptates corporis sensu definiunt'): either eschewing or ignorant of spiritual sense ('nullam voluptatem liquidam et solidam animorum esse putant'), they fail to descry the light of heaven, having never partaken of divine illumination ('qui neque lumen coeli viderunt unquam, neque divinarum illustrationum participes facti sunt').²⁶ In a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 2:14, 'But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God', he describes them as specimens of animal man ('animalis homo'), 'colour-blind', injudicious, and incapable of perceiving the works of God ('quae Dei sunt [...] coecus enim de coloribus non iudicat').²⁷ Such men, devoid of spiritual discernment, cannot possibly recognize that Ignatius's perfection issues from the many revelations he was divinely granted. Ribadeneyra admonishes them to draw the right conclusion from the visual evidence of these illustrationes amply mustered in the Vita: Wherefore since we see in Ignatius the effects of divine virtue, and these in such quantity, that they cannot be denied, having been disclosed, exhibited, and placed before the eyes of all [...] let us observe that those rays of [his] peerless life flowed forth from this light of divine inspiration, as if from the most copious fountain of celestial grace'. 28 In the same way, the Life of Blessed Father Ignatius of

²⁵ Ibid. 126.

²⁶ Ibid. 128–130. Opposed to *voluptates corporis sensu* (sensory pleasures of the body), the phrase *voluptatem liquidam et solidam animorum* (pure and genuine pleasure of souls) emphasizes that the spiritual sense, if properly exercised, provides a source of true refreshment and intense satisfaction.

²⁷ Ibid. 130.

²⁸ Ibid. 132: 'Quapropter cum effectus divinae virtutis et tam multas admirabiles videamus in Ignatio, eaeque apertae, expositae, oculisque omnium ita subiectae sint, ut negari

Loyola invites the beholder to follow Ignatius in looking past mere sensory images, just as he saw through the Argus-eyed serpent, and furthermore to accompany him in attending to the spiritual images divinely revealed as irrefutable warrants of his supreme sanctity.

Ribadeneyra emphasizes that Ignatius himself viewed every aspect of his life as if it were an exemplary image called up internally and then fully externalized. This dynamic process of visualization underlies, indeed sanctions, the production of the engraved *Life*, which may be seen to translate these reflexive Ignatian images into pictorial prototypes: 'Since therefore by the grace of God he had emerged from the straits of temptation, and yet for all that never ceased from expressing in himself the true image of all virtues ('veram in se imaginem exprimendam'), so it pleased God the source of all goodness, to assuage his servant with divine consolations and illustrate his mind with heavenly mysteries, the consolations of the Lord gladdening his spirit, as he had borne in heart a multitude of sorrows'.²⁹ Viewed in these terms, the spiritual images now to be considered operate at one remove, as images divinely bestowed within the images of a saintly life originating from Ignatius.

Plate 4, scenes A and B, put forward two further inflections of the spiritual image [Fig. 5]. On the steps of the Dominican church in Manresa, Ignatius recites the Hours of the Blessed Virgin, addressing daily prayers to the three persons of the Trinity, when in mind he is lifted up to God ('caepit ita in Deum intellectu ferri'), 'as if he were discerning the Most Holy Trinity by means of a certain visible image ('specie quadam visibili') that was signifying externally what he was perceiving internally ('id significante exterius, quod interius percipiebat')'.³⁰ The two images exist in tandem, the one exterior, visible, and signifying, the other interior, perceptible, and signified: together they allow Ignatius to see with bodily eyes what the *oculi mentis* behold from within. If the external image issues from the internal, it also redounds upon it, causing the ineffable and yet

non possint [...] intelligamusque omnes illos perfectae vitae radios ex hac divinarum illustrationum luce et quasi ex copiosissimo caelestis gratiae fonte, tot rivulos profluxisse'.

²⁹ Ibid. 120–122: 'Cum igitur Dei misericordia ex tentationum augustiis emersisset, et tamen iccirco de summa animi contentione ad virtutum omnium veram in se imaginem exprimendam nihil omnino remitteret; placuit remuneratori bonorum omnium Deo servum suum divinis consolationibus mulcere et mentem illius coelestium mysteriorum cognitionibus illustrare, ut secundum multitudinem dolorum quos in corde suo pertulerat, consolationes Domini laetificarent animam eius'.

 $^{^{30}\,}$ Ibid. 122: 'quasi Sanctissimam Trinitatem specie quadam visibili id significante exterius, quod interius percipiebat, cerneret'.

representable mystery visually to impress itself upon his consciousness: Which occurrence inscribed this inexpressible mystery upon his mind, as though imprinting it there ('in eius mente hoc ineffabile mysterium inscripsit ac veluti impressit'), to such an extent that he, a man only able to read and write, at once set about the task of composing a book [on the Trinity], and for the rest of his life the traces of that truth remained visibly engraved [upon him] ('insculptae illius veritatis vestigia extarent')'. 31 As the outer image resonates with the inner, so Ignatius seizes every opportunity publicly to represent this imprint of the Trinity, utilizing the full spectrum of rhetorical means – arguments, analogies, and examples – to render this mystery for his audiences ('tanta tamque varia rationum, similitudinum atque exemplorum copia, ut admirationi omnibus audientibus esset').32 He thus endeavours assiduously to disseminate verbal images of the Trinity, commensurate in thought and speech with that 'certain visible image' ('species quaedam visibilis'), the manifestation of an interior perception, projected as an exterior image and then re-internalized. Plate 4 ingeniously delineates this circulation amongst external and internal images: the sovereign Trinity is pictured within an aureole of clouds, radiant with the light emanating from the Holy Spirit; one ray pierces the inwardly luminous, outwardly shadowy strata, its point ending at Ignatius's eyes, its beam coincident with his line of sight. If the needle-like vertex suggests that the Trinitarian image penetrates Ignatius, tracing its vestigia like a burin cutting into copperplate, the shaft of light, expanding from his eyes, also implicitly qualifies the Trinity as an extromitted image that is actually observed. Emitted and transmitted, the spiritual image seems at one and the same time to exit and to enter Ignatius, and this doubleness allows it to serve multiple functions: it signifies the interior image he was perceiving when with his eyes he discerned its exterior complement, and also the visible image imprinting itself from without as an internal image.

Plate 4, scene B depicts a spiritual image solely visible to the eyes of the mind: during the celebration of the Mass, while viewing the elevated host, Ignatius discerns what truly inheres in the bread and wine, once they have been consecrated [Fig. 5]. Ribadeneyra avers that Ignatius is really seeing with his mind's eye, not merely imagining, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist: 'Yet again, reverently attending Mass in the church of that

³¹ Ibid. 122–124: 'Quae res ita in eius mente hoc ineffabile mysterium inscripsit ac veluti impressit, ut illo ipso tempore, homo legendi scribendique tantum sciens, de eo librum scribere sit aggressus, et ad totam vitam insculptae illius veritatis vestigia extarent'.

³² Ibid. 122.

same monastery, he one day saw clearly with the eyes of his mind, when the body of the Lord was exposed to view for the people to adore, that the Lord Iesus Christ, true God and man, is most truly contained in that sublime and majestic sacrament'. 33 In plate 4, the superposition of radiant Christ and luminous host, both lit by celestial light flowing from the upper left (unlike Ignatius, the priest, and the acolyte who are lit from the upper right), puts stress on the fact that the spiritual image represents what the visible host has become. Indeed, the latter is now the mere image of bread, having been transformed into Christ, whereas the image of Christ hovering just above, mimetically confirms the mystery of transubstantiation that under normal circumstances can be intuited but not observed. That Ignatius seems intently to stare at both images implies the complementarity of bodily and spiritual vision, as also does the formal analogy between the circular host and the cloud-encircled Christ, the one and the other aureolate. Yet another device, the placement of the wafer, signifies the truth the two images enable Ignatius to apprehend: aligned with the ring of clouds, the host appears to enframe Christ and thereby to contain him. The absence of rays extending from the spiritual image to Ignatius insists that a different sort of simultaneity is at work in scenes A and B: whereas the image of the Trinity shows how Ignatius externalizes (and then re-internalizes) what he sees internally, the image of Christ shows how he internalizes what he sees externally - the element of bread - converting it into the likeness of the corpus Domini.

In the Vita, Ribadeneyra closely associates this incident with allied experiences that confirm the humanity of Christ by means of divinely granted images – visis – discernible to spiritual sight alone:

Frequently and at length, while intently praying, he saw the humanity of Christ the Redeemer with the interior eye of the spirit ('interiore animi vidit obtutu'), and also at times the most blessed Virgin Mary; not only at Manresa, but afterward also at Jerusalem, nearby Padua, and oftentimes elsewhere. Certainly these sights ('visis') so strengthened him in faith and spirit and filled him with such celestial light, that meditating these things he often

³³ Ibid. 124: 'In templo etiam eiusdem monasterii, cum rei divinae venerabundus interesset, et Corpus Domini adorandum populo proponeretur, mentis oculis quodam die clare vidit augusto illo atque tremendo Sacramento Dominum Iesum Christum, verum Deum atque hominem, verissime contineri'. According to Ribadeneyra, at another time Ignatius was given to see with his mind's eye an image of the creation of the world, that surpassed all his powers of speech; see ibid.: 'Alio item tempore, magna cum spiritus alacritate modus eius menti obiectus est, quo mundum Deus condidit; quem longo post intervallo, cum haec eadem ipsemet Pater narraret, se non satis affirmabat explicare posse'.

came to the conclusion that if ever the mysteries of faith attested by the monuments of sacred literature were to vanish, or even if sacred Scripture were to be lost (a thing that could never be), nevertheless these sure truths had been so deeply impressed upon him, that merely from those things he had seen ('ex illis tantum quae viderat'), he did not doubt but that he might grasp these [truths] rightly, transmit them to others, and even embrace death in defence of them.³⁴

On this account, the spiritual images seen by the *oculi mentis* and imprinted by the *interior animi obtutus* produce effects so vivid and intense, that the memory of them is potentially capable of making known, with scriptural force, the mystery of the Incarnation and the sacramental mystery of the Eucharist, as well as the person of Mary. Plate 4 alludes in several ways to the forceful presence of this kind of spiritual image, that makes visible what is present but invisible in the sacramental species: first, Christ is posited as the object of Ignatius's prominent gaze, as surely as the wafer held aloft by the priest, as if to imply that the spiritual image is no less discernible than the Eucharistic bread; second, his arms extended in the *orans* gesture, Christ is portrayed as the chief celebrant of the Mass, just as his exposed torso identifies him as the *verum corpus* offered in sacrifice; third, the similarity between the images of the Trinity and of Christ, along with their like prominence in scenes A and B, indicates that both are intensely if differently visible to Ignatius.

The passage cited above refers to two further apparitions of Christ, seen respectively in the vicinity of Padua and in Jerusalem. Whereas plate 6, scene C, illustrates the radiant image of Christ at Jerusalem in a manner similar to plate 4, scene B, its counterpart in plate 5, scene A, illustrates the encounter with Christ outside Padua in a notably different way, and it is worth asking why [Figs. 5, 6, & 7]. To begin with the more familiar scene, plate 6 focusses on the theme of *vestigia* as a source of spiritual consolation: these are trace images of Christ that have the status of relics [Fig. 7]. Having finally reached Jerusalem after many vicissitudes, Ignatius goes to see the sacred sites, deriving rare consolation from the

³⁴ Ibid.: 'Saepissime orationi intentus et diu quidem Christi Redemptoris nostri humanitatem interiore animi vidit obtutu, et aliquando beatissimam etiam Virginem Mariam; neque id Manresae tantum, sed post etiam Hierosolymis, et non longe ab urbe Patavio, et alias saepe. Quibus quidem visis, ita in fide ac spiritu confirmatus et coelesti lumine completus est, ut saepe haec secum reputans, illud etiam statueret, si aut sacrarum literarum monumentis consignata mysteria fidei non essent, aut certe si Sacra Scriptura (quod fieri non potest) intercidisset, sibi tamen ita esse certa penitusque infixa, ut ex illis tantum quae viderat, non dubitaret, et recte ea intelligere, et aliis tradere, et pro illorum defensione etiam mortem oppetere'.

vestiges of Christ: 'As soon as he arrived at Jerusalem, he was admirably consoled by the sight of the holy city, which consolation remained firm and constant all the time he was there. He resolved to stay in Jerusalem, to spend the rest of his life devoutly tending and viewing the hallowed sites imprinted by the traces of Christ the Lord ('impressis Christi Domini nostri vestigiis') and as such, fragrant with marvellous sanctity, and to dedicate himself to the salvation of his fellow men, as far as he was able'. 35 Scenes A and B portray him intently searching for the visible traces of Christ, chief amongst which are the footprints he left on Mount Olivet at the Ascension. Roughly handled by the henchman sent to arrest him for having visited Betphage unaccompanied, he is vouchsafed the greatest of all consolations, consistent in kind though far greater in degree than the others he has thus far experienced: 'Ignatius, readily suffering himself to be brought back, obtained a great and singular consolation during that march homeward, for though seized by the arm and jostled, all the time he saw Christ present before him and marching along, as if leading the way, as far as the convent [of the Franciscans]'.36 The image he sees resembles the others he has seen previously in Jerusalem, in that it bears witness to the presence of Christ, but it also differs from them in revealing him whole rather than vestigially, and in showing him as living, contemporaneous, and situationally engaged. This type of spiritual image, since it guides Ignatius's actions, appears emphatically external to him, and again, since it offers itself integrally, rather than requiring internally to be fashioned from reliquary vestiges, such an image may be seen as if it originates outside himself, thence to be internalized. All these operations are spiritual: Ignatius views Christ spiritually, not with bodily eyes, a point scene C underscores by distinguishing between Ignatius, who stares upwards fixedly, and the henchman, who sees nothing. His upturned face is brightly lit by natural not supernatural light, another allusion to the status of Christ as a spiritual image that operates as if externally, and yet

³⁵ Bk. 1, ch. 11, in ibid. 156: 'Hierosolymam igitur cum primum venit, admirabilem in ipso sanctae civitatis aspectu consolationem percepit, quam constantem, quandiu in ea urbe fuit, perpetuamque semper habuit. Deliberatum erat Ignatio Hierosolymis remanere, et sacris locis, qui ex impressis Christi Domini nostri vestigiis miram redolent pietatem religiose colendis visendisque reliquum vitae traducere, proximorumque saluti, pro sua virili, deservire'.

³⁶ Ibid. 160: 'Ipse vero facile duci se passus est, magnamque in eo itinere atque singularem a Domino consolationem accepit, cum ita correptus brachio et impulsus, Christum semper supra se astantem atque incedentem, et in coenobium usque sibi veluti praeeuntem aspiceret'.

enlightens internally rather than casting light literally. Christ is depicted in full, striding forward, pointing the way with his right hand, signalling with his left for Ignatius to follow. Ignatius gestures toward his heart, indicating the interior place whither this image is being translated and the consolation it bestows. That he seems to move in lockstep with Christ signifies the image's animating power, its ability to inspire the *imitatio Christi*.

Plate 5, scene A, illustrates a different kind of exchange between Ignatius and Christ, who is seen to fulfill the prophecy uttered in Joshua 1:5, 'as I have been with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not leave thee nor forsake thee', and to substantiate the promise made in *Hebrews* 13:5: 'for he hath said: I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee' [Fig. 6]. Weakened by many hardships and emaciated, Ignatius falls by the wayside, his fellow travellers having shunned him for fear of the plague. Christ then appears and consoles him: 'But he who said, "I shall neither desert nor forsake you", looked after the abandoned Ignatius, took up the one cast down and embraced him. For the night after he had been deserted, Christ showed himself to him ('obtulit se illi') in the broad plain leading from Chioggia to Padua, and by his gaze ('aspectu suo') very much restored his spirit, shoring it up for weightier things, and so presided over his journey, that entering and exiting Padua, the city guards neither delayed nor disturbed him in any way, and he had easy access to Venice'. 37 This scene incorporates no framing device, such as a cloudy aureole, that separates Ignatius from Christ, unlike plate 4, scenes A and B, and plate 6, scene A, and nor does Christ differ in scale from Ignatius [Figs. 5 & 7]. Moreover, though haloed, Christ is lit by the same light as Ignatius, and he not only gazes into his eyes and blesses him, but also gently touches the supplicant's hand [Fig. 6]. These features precisely correspond to Ribadeneyra's usage, identifying the presence of Christ as fully embodied. The term obtulit, for example, signifies that he showed himself, and more than this, implies that he bodied himself forth as a perceptible indeed substantive apparition. Seen in this light, the term aspectu refers to the gaze (or alternatively, visible form) of Christ himself, not merely to an image of him.

³⁷ Bk. 1, ch. 10, in ibid. 150: 'Sed qui dixit: "non te deseram, neque derelinquam", ille desertum invisit Ignatium, abiectum suscepit et complexus est. Namque obtulit se illi nocte, postquam relictus est, proxima, Christus, in latissimo quodam campo a Fossa Clodia pergenti Patavium, plurimumque aspectu suo recreavit eius animum et ad graviora perferenda roboravit, et ita eius iter direxit, ut Patavinae urbis custodiae ingredientem egredientemve illum nihil omnino remorarentur aut interpellarent, et aditum Venetias perfacilem haberet'.

Which is to say that the scene in question, notwithstanding its kinship to the spiritual images carefully differentiated elsewhere in the series, qualifies as something more than an image and is treated accordingly. Christ interacts with Ignatius corporeally and spiritually: the restorative effect he exercises upon Ignatius's spirit results from the image he bodily projects upon his perceptual faculty of sight.

If plate 5, scene A, assists the viewer better to discriminate between the spiritual image and other varieties of divine apparition, plate 1, scenes A, B, and C, brings attention squarely to bear on the relation between the pictorial and the spiritual image [Figs. 2 & 6]. The three scenes describe the crucial stages of Ignatius's conversion to the religious life, all of which involve images of one kind or another [Fig. 2]. The principal scene sets the theme: sorely wounded at the Battle of Pamplona, the soldier Ignatius lies bedridden at Loyola, his life hanging in the balance, when he is visited by St. Peter, whose appearance precipitates a miraculous recovery. Ribadeneyra takes care to characterize this visitation in visual terms, as an image internally beheld, whose presence is mediated by Ignatius's consciousness of the inward action of beholding: 'So then, in that very hour when the thing now posed the maximum risk to life, and the doctors judged that death would impend, if no improvement occurred by the middle of the night, the strength of the illness began positively to abate. Which we believe to have been effected by the will of divine providence, through the intercession of St. Peter, whom with a special reverence Ignatius had always cherished, and whom he seemed to himself to be seeing as present and bestowing health ('quemque adesse sanitatemque adferre, sibi videre visus est')'.38 As in plate 4, scene A, the rays of light illuminating Ignatius in plate 1, scene A, indicate that the spiritual image is interiorly perceived [Figs. 2 & 5]. Whereas at Manresa the Trinity is discerned by means of a visible image that signifies externally what Ignatius was perceiving internally, at Loyola St. Peter becomes present through an interior image in which Ignatius seems to himself to be viewing the saint's curative visitation. Ribadeneyra further suggests that this is an internal matter by stressing that the presence of St. Peter is not a proven fact, but rather, a fact to be believed ('factum credimus'). Scene A alludes to the heightened

³⁸ Bk. 1, ch. 1, in ibid. 82: 'Cum igitur res iam ad summum vitae discrimen adducta esset, mortemque imminere iudicarent medici, si ad mediam usque noctem nihil melius eveniret, ea ipsa hora vis morbi remitti aperte caepit; quod non absque divinae providentiae consilio, divo Petro deprecatore factum credimus, quem praecipua quadam Ignatius religione semper coluerat, quemque adesse sanitatemque adferre, sibi videre visus est'.

interiority of this apparition by depicting Ignatius as not merely lit but veritably floodlit by the benedictory radiance of St. Peter, whose triple aureole (perhaps an allusion, like the keys, to his papal authority) illumines encircling clouds, pouring past them to saturate Ignatius. His gaze fixed on Peter, who in turn gazes down and blesses the bandaged leg, Ignatius gestures toward his heart, the true locus wherein, on Ribadeneyra's account, the miracle transpiring is seen to be viewed. That he observes Peter observing him perhaps functions as an implicit reference to the way in which this visitation becomes apparent conditionally, when he observes himself observing Peter.

Plate 1, scene A, as a whole should therefore be construed as a spiritual image – the image of himself gazing at an epiphany of Peter – that Ignatius becomes conscious of viewing [Fig. 2]. The books on the bedside table, allusions to the lives of Christ and the saints that he read while recuperating, call attention to the meditative state of mind that made possible this doubled act of beholding. The supplementary scenes B and C provide essential visual comparanda, setting forth two other kinds of spiritual image. Doubly framed by apertures edged with moulding and by the shaded arches of a portico, these scenes appear to be images within the image, and as such, their primary task – to comment on the varieties of the spiritual image – is signalled and made conspicuous. Both scenes represent further stages in Ignatius's conversion: having struggled mightily to choose between the spirit and the flesh, or more precisely, between the *spiritus Dei* and the *spiritus mundi*, he resolves finally to transform his life, and, freed by this resolution from the agony of choice, kneels down to pray before an image of the Immaculata; in scene B, he addresses Christ, by way of the Marian image, pledging to be governed by him, steadfastly to follow his standard, and ever to be worthy of his generalship.³⁹ The earthquake that ensues is interpreted by Ribadeneyra as proof of the power of efficacious prayer to expel and vanquish the devil.⁴⁰ The picture before

³⁹ Bk. 1, ch. 2, in ibid. 88: 'Ex qua, usu deinceps uberiore spiritualium rerum aucta, omnium, quas in Exercitiis tradidit de spirituum diversitate, praeceptionum rivuli profluxerunt. Etenim animadvertit primum duos esse spiritus, Dei et mundi, non solum diversos, sed penitus etiam inter sese pugnantes; tum diligenter observavit utriusque spiritus proprietates'. See also the distinction made between Ignatius, whose spirit is porous to divine illumination, and those whose attachment to the *voluptates corporis* forecloses any cultivation of the *voluptas animorum*, in Bk. 1, ch. 7, in ibid. 128–130. Ribadeneyra calls men of this ilk representatives of the *animalis homo*.

⁴⁰ Îbid. 90–92: 'Dum autem ante imaginem immaculatae Virginis Mariae in genua procumbit [...] ecce tibi, terrae motu de repente facto domus tota contremiscit [...]. Itaque, quemadmodum locus in quo Apostoli orabant divinitus contremuit, et carcer, ubi

which Ignatius kneels differs from the spiritual images in plates 4, 6, and 10, in being neither luminous nor enclouded, and unlike the apparition of St. Peter, it is connected to him only by the attention he confers [Figs. 2, 5, 7, & 11]. (The same holds true for plate 2, scene C, engraved by Cornelis Galle, another episode of solemn pledging, in which Ignatius keeps vigil before the effigy of the Blessed Virgin of Montserrat, and promising to serve her as a Christian knight, leaves his sword and dagger as ex votos [Fig. 3].)⁴¹

Scene C, by contrast, represents the vision of the Virgin and Child that Ignatius is given to behold shortly thereafter at Loyola [Fig. 2]. Ribadeneyra distinguishes between the forceful effects of this *visio* and the far less decisive results of the meditative vigil at Loyola:

These things having been done, nonetheless Ignatius established only that once he had regained his health, he would set out for Jerusalem, with a certain noble [self-] contempt preparing himself beforehand by means of scourges, fasts, and other disciplines of this sort. [...] And what is more, a certain splendid and admirable vision ('visio') caused these desires of his, now aroused and confirmed, to burn far more intensely than formerly. For one night, when Ignatius was keeping vigil, the likeness of the most bright and blessed Virgin Mary, together with the holy Child Jesus, was made present to his eyes ('clarissima beatissimae Virginis Mariae, una cum sancto puero Iesu species obiecta est'); this image persisting for a considerable time, he was wondrously restored and filled with a certain divine delight. Whence began so great a disgust at his past life, and especially for anything associated with impure pleasure, that the images of all unchaste things seemed altogether to flow out of his spirit. And that the vision ('visionem') was fruitful and true, is proved by the fact that from that hour until his last breath, by divine favour he conserved his chastity unimpaired.⁴²

Paulus et Silas vincti de nocte in oratione vigilabant, terraemotu concussus est, eoque signo declaravit Dominus et servorum suorum virtutem et orationis efficacitatem; sic nunc Ignatio orante et cubiculo contremiscente voluit fortasse idem Dominus ostendere Ignatii preces sibi gratas et ad impetrandum efficaces'.

⁴¹ Plate 2 inscribed: 'A. In aede B. Virginis Montis serrati generaliter peccata sua confitetur. Lib. p. c. 4. B. Vestes suas mendico donat, seque aspera tunica induit. Lib. p. c. 4. C. Novis armis atque spiritalibus accinctus, ante aram B. Mariae totam noctem in oratione traducit. Lib. p. c. 4. D. Ut mendicum a periculo liberet, illi se vestes dedisse fatetur. Lib. p. c. 4.'.

⁴² Bk. 1, ch. 2, in Dalmases (ed.), *Vita Ignatii Loyolae auctore Petro de Ribadeneyra* 92: Haec gesta sunt: certi tamen ab Ignatio nihil aliud constitutum est, nisi ut Hierosolymam, ubi convaluisset, proficisceretur, seque prius flagellis, ieiuniis et id genus asperitatibus generosa quadam indignatione conficeret. [...] Sed haec illius desideria excitata iam et confirmata, multo quam antea inflammavit ardentius praeclara quaedam atque admirabilis visio. Nam vigilanti nocte quadam Ignatio, clarissima beatissimae Virginis Mariae, una cum sancto puero Iesu species obiecta est; qua aliquandiu permanente, mirifice recrea-

Encircled by glowing clouds, the effulgent image of the Virgin and Child recalls the image of the *corpus Domini* in plate 4, scene B, but with this difference: there is no mediating species (or better, image) between the vision and Ignatius [Figs. 2 & 5]. And nor are there any rays of light, for by definition the visionary image is heavensent: it originates from heaven, not from within Ignatius, howsoever potent its corporeal and spiritual effects upon him may ultimately prove to be. Such a spiritual image is different in kind from the sacred image featured in scene B, and in degree from the seemingly exterior, but in fact entirely interior image featured in scene A. Utterly transforming, it consolidates the process of conversion initiated by the event recorded in scene A.

The most complex spiritual image to be found in the *Life of Blessed Father Ignatius of Loyola* appears in plate 10, scene A [Fig. 11]. It takes up most of the print, a measure of its importance to the founder's life. This is the famous vision at La Storta, experienced by Ignatius on his way to Rome, where he was hoping to secure papal approbation for his new order. The vision, as Ribadeneyra intimates and plate 10 demonstrates, consists of two primary elements – a spiritual image of God the Father and the visionary presence of Christ with the Cross. It thus combines a version of the encounter seen in plate 1, scene C (the advent of the Virgin and Child at Manresa), with a version of the image type seen in plate 1, scene A (the apparition of St. Peter at Loyola) and plate 4, scene A (the image of the Trinity at Manresa) [Figs. 2, 5, & 11]:

But it came to pass, as they were approaching Rome, that Ignatius entered a solitary and deserted church to pray. There his heart was straightway altered, and the eyes of his mind illumined by a most bright light ('oculique mentis clarissima luce collustrati ita sunt'), so that he clearly saw how God the Father was commending him and his fellows to God the Son bearing the Cross, and delivering them into his invincible hand and protection. Having received them unto himself with a face sweet and mild, even though [burdened] with the Cross, Jesus said, 'I shall be favourable to you in Rome' Renewed and confirmed in a wonderful way by so divine and admirable a vision ('admirabili divinaque visione'), Ignatius said to Fabre and Lainez, 'I surely know not what shall come to pass in Rome, whether God shall wish

tus est et divina quadam voluptate perfusus. Unde tantum eum praeteritae vitae taedium coepit, maximeque earum rerum, quae cum obscoena delectatione coniunctae sunt, ut omnium impudicarum rerum imagines ex animo eius effluere omnino viderentur. Et sane veram fuisse visionem ac fructuosam res ipsa comprobavit, cum ab ea hora ad extremum usque spiritum, castitatis integritatem divino beneficio conservaverit'.

us to be crucified or placed upon the wheel; yet of this I am certain and assured, that Jesus Christ shall favour us, whatsoever end awaits'.⁴³

Ribadeneyra situates this glorious vision amongst the many revelations ('illustrationes') Ignatius was granted during his journey ad Urbem. Together they operate to impress and internally to imprint upon his mind the most Holy Name of Jesus ('sacratissimum suum nomen impressit penitusque infixit'), impelling him to acknowledge with supernal clarity ('propter divini luminis claritatem') that the new society must be named after Jesus, its true founder. 44 Indeed, so illuminative are these ocular experiences that they seem to restore him to that measureless state of divine knowing he attained formerly at Manresa, while seated beside the river (plate 3, scene C) ('ut restitutus sibi in eum statum videretur, quem Manresae habuisset, ubi supra modum [...] illustratus est') [Figs. 4 & 11].⁴⁵ Consequently, the singular event at La Storta, as recounted by Ribadeneyra, consists of three elements: the revelation of divine mysteries that illuminate him; the spiritual image, addressed to the oculi mentis, of God the Father commending Ignatius to Christ the Son; and the vision of Christ bearing the Cross, who speaks directly to Ignatius, avowing his gracious intention of supporting him. Using the term *visum* (image, sight, vision), Ribadeneyra also refers to the 'very clear image' of Jesus seen at La Storta ('praeclaro illo viso'), that indelibly imprinted Ignatius with the most Holy Name. 46 The term *visum*, since it commonly signifies a sense-impression received by the eye, perhaps serves to emphasize that the sight of Christ

⁴³ Bk. 2, ch. 11, in ibid. 270: 'Accidit autem, cum ad Urbem approprinquarent, ut in templum desertum et solum ingressus, oraret ardentius. Ibi mutatum prorsus cor eius est oculique mentis clarissima luce collustrati ita sunt, ut perspicue videret quomodo Deus Pater Deo Filio crucem gestanti Ignatium sociosque peramanter commendabat, in eiusque dexteram invictam et patrocinium tradebat. Quos cum benignissimus Iesus in se recepisset, blando placidoque vultu, ut erat cum cruce, ad Ignatium conversus: Ego (inquit) vobis Romae propitius ero. Qua quidem admirabili divinaque visione, mirum in modum recreatus Ignatius et confirmatus est Fabroque post orationem, et Laini: – Quid nobis, inquit, Romae futurum sit plane ignoro; in crucemne Deus nos, an in rotam agi velit; hoc tamen mihi compertum est atque exploratum, quicunque nos exitus maneat, Iesum Christum nobis fore propitium –'. Ribadeneyra introduces Bk. 2, ch. 11, by stating that Ignatius was miraculously illuminated by revelations en route to Venice, Vicenza, and elsewhere; see ibid., 268: 'Itaque toto hoc tempore mirabiles illustrationes habuit, Venetiis, Vicetiae, aliis in urbibus, in via'.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 272.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 268

⁴⁶ Ibid. 272: 'Et tum praeclaro illo viso, tum aliis divinis illustrationibus multis magnisque, ita Dominus Iesus eius in mente sacratissimum suum nomen impressit penitusque infixit, ut eius ex nomine Societati nomen imponeret'.

was not merely apprehensible to the *oculi mentis*, but also visible sensibly, and as such, distinct from the spiritual image of God the Father.⁴⁷

Plate 10, scene A, makes this distinction between the spiritual image of God the Father and the visio cum visum of Christ the Son, and even exaggerates it: Christ appears as he does in plate 5, scene A, where he succours Ignatius on the road to Venice, interacting with him as if he were present actually and substantially [Figs. 6 & 11]. He approaches and speaks directly to him, his eyes levelled at his, and yet, two devices would seem still to indicate that Christ, though he gives the impression of being tangibly present, is in truth an image, albeit a living one. The tip of the Cross elides into the angelic cloudbank, becoming transparent to it, and the halo emanating from the Holy Face is likewise annexed to the luminescent register of cloud attaching to God the Father. If these features underscore the status of the visionary Christ as a species of the spiritual image, in other respects, his assertive presence and corporeal appearance call attention to his status as one of the marvellous and transforming illustrationes experienced by Ignatius during the journey to Rome. Illustratio, as we have seen, is a religious term signifying revelation, but it is also a rhetorical term denoting vivid representation, that is, the action of bringing an image vividly to mind. The seeming substance of Christ, as represented in plate 10, scene A, exemplifies pictorially that the *visio Christi* operates at the highest level of apparent reality, whence comes its affective power.

With regard to the rest of scene A, the rays of light extending from God to Ignatius fulfill multiple functions: first of all, as in plate 3, scene C, and plate 11, scene B, they stand for the heavensent revelations that illuminate his spirit, refreshing and delighting it ('mirificasque et plane coelestes animi voluptates percipiebat') [Figs. 4, 11, & 12]; since they prolong the pointing gesture of God, these rays symbolize as well the act of commendation by which Ignatius is conveyed lovingly to the patronage of Christ ('permanenter commendabat, in eiusque dexteram invictam et patrocinium tradebat'); and finally, as in plate 1, scene A, and plate 4, scene A, they indicate *mutatis mutandis* that God the Father is present in the form of a spiritual image discernible to the *oculi mentis*, which a change of heart has opened ('mutatum prorsus cor eius est oculi mentis

⁴⁷ The definition of *visum* as 'an impression made by some external object upon the senses' derives from the usage of Cicero in *Academicae quaestiones* 1 and 2 and *Lucullus* 58, on which see Lewis C.T. – Short C. (eds.), *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: 1879; reprint ed., 1958) 1998; and Glare P.G.W. (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: 1982; reprint ed., 2007) 2077–2078.

clarissima luce collustrati ita sunt, ut perspicue videret') [Figs. 2, 5, & 11]. AR That Ignatius simultaneously beholds this spiritual image and the vision of Christ, is indicated by his binary gaze, which looks up toward God and across toward Christ, and besides, by the gazes that triangulate amongst the three chief protagonists – God looking at Christ, who looks at Ignatius, who looks at both God and Christ. The triangular halo and the orb, attributes respectively of the Father as first person of the Trinity and of his sovereignty, associate plate 10, scene A, with the divine mysteries, this time iconic, poured forth in plate 3, scene C, and the Trinitarian mystery imaged internally and externally in plate 4, scene A [Figs. 4, 5, & 11]. In these ways, the miracle at La Storta is portrayed as a compound of revelation, vision, and spiritual image, that engages the eyes sensibly and spiritually, assuring Ignatius of his vocation as founder.

In conclusion, the Life of Blessed Father Ignatius of Loyola assembles the main visual testimonies, distinguished in kind and degree, by means of which God shored up the faith of the Societatis Iesu fundator. These spiritual images are carefully and instrumentally differentiated by Ribadeneyra: a reflexive spiritual image that represents the very act of seeing spiritually (plate 1, scene A), a visionary image of the Virgin and Child counterposed to a pictorial image of the Virgin (plate 1, scene C), aniconic contemplative images (plate 3, scene C), a falsely visionary image counterposed to a true effigy of the Cross (plate 3, scene D), a jointly interior and exterior image of the Trinity (plate 4, scene A), an interior image of the corpus Domini projected onto the image of the sacramental bread (plate 4, scene B), a living image of the whole of Christ (plate 6, scene C), and a spiritual image of God annexed to a visionary image of Christ, available respectively to the oculi mentis and the oculi corporales mentisque (plate 10, scene A) [Figs. 2, 4, 5, 7, & 11]. The complexity of the final image becomes evident, its constituent parts legible, when inspected by way of the prior images. Adapted from Ribadeneyra's Vita Ignatii Loyolae by way of Juan de Mesa's paintings, Theodoor Galle's series ingeniously promulgates pictorial equivalents for these virtually neo-scholastic distinctions amongst the varieties of spiritual image. Together, the textual Vita and the engraved Life demonstrate that the criteria applied to discriminating one spiritual image from another were no less subtle and precise than those employed in contemporary treatises on art, sacred and secular – Gabriele

⁴⁸ Bk. 2, ch. 11, in Dalmases (ed.), Vita Ignatii Loyolae auctore Petro de Ribadeneyra 268–270.

Paleotti's *De imaginibus sacris, et profanis* [...] *libri quinque* (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1594) or Johannes Molanus's *De historia sacrarum imaginum et picturarum pro vero earum usu contra abusus* (Louvain, Ioannes Bogardus: 1594), for instance – that distinguish amongst the varieties of pictorial image.

Ribadeneyra's conception of spiritual images discernible to the interior eye of the spirit illuminated by God derives from the catalogue of such images enumerated by Augustine in Book 12 of *De Genesi ad litteram* (*On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*).⁴⁹ Composed as an appendix to his great treatise on the first three chapters of Genesis and their historical, as opposed to

⁴⁹ Augustine's treatment of sensation in his mature treatise, De Genesi ad litteram (On the Literal Meaning of Genesis), written between 401 and 415 A.D. provides the locus classicus for any definition of spiritual vision and the spiritual image. On De Genesi, see Agaësse P. – Solignac A. (eds. and trans.), La Genèse au sens littéral en douze livres, 2 vols., Œuvres de Saint Augustin 48 (Paris: 1972) vol. I, 11-66; and Hammond Taylor J. (ed. and trans.), St. Augustine, The Literal Meaning of Genesis, 2 vols., Ancient Christian Writers 41 (New York -Ramsey, NJ: 1982) vol. I, 1–16. On Book 12, as it pertains to Augustine's theory of sensation, see Miles M.R., Augustine on the Body, American Academy of Religion Dissertation Series 31 (Ann Arbor – Missoula, MT: 1979) 22–30; and eadem, "Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine's De trinitate and Confessions", The Journal of Religion 63 (1983) 125-142. In what follows, the connection between Ribadeneyra and Augustine is argued from close analogies between their respective theories of the spiritual image. Ribadeneyra's interest in Augustine would have been nurtured at the University of Padua, where he trained in philosophy and theology, and indeed, for the Marquesa of Camarasa, a fervent patroness of the Jesuit order, he later translated Augustine's Confessiones, Meditationes, and Manuale into Spanish; see Prat J.-M., Histoire du Père Ribadeneyra, disciple du Saint Ignace (Paris: 1862) 71, 479. Moreover, Rule 8 of the "Rules for the Master of Novices", incorporated into the *Institutiones Societatis Jesu* of 1580, prescribes the spiritual reading of Augustine's Sermones, Meditationes, and Confessiones; see Guibert J. de, The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice, A Historical Study, ed. G.E. Ganss - trans. W.J. Young (St. Louis: 1974) 215–218. In the Ratio studiorum of 1599, Rule 1 of the "Rules for the Professor" of Sacred Scripture", closely follows Augustine's method of scriptural exegesis in De Genesi, stating that 'concern for the literal meaning is foremost' and that the teacher must 'explain with devotion, learning, and seriousness the sacred texts according to their genuine and literal meaning so that this meaning might strengthen true faith in God and the principles of morality'. Rule 3 defines 'literal' in the manner of Augustine, explaining that such meaning derives from the way in which particular words and phrases are used, that is, from 'Sacred Scripture's special ways of speaking and figures of speech'. Question 43 of the "Questions from the Summa", an addendum to the "Rules for the Professor of Scholastic Theology", implicitly directs the instructor not only to Thomas Aquinas but also to other exegetical treatises, not least De Genesi, by stating as a matter of general principle, that the scriptural exegete has exclusive purview over such topics as 'visible apparitions [...] attributed to God in the Old or New Testaments' and 'visible signs in which the Holy Spirit has appeared'. For these regulae and quaestio, see Pavur C. (ed. and trans.), The Ratio Studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education (St. Louis: 2005) 55–56, 76. On Augustine's conception of the literal, see Teske R.J., "Genesi ad literam liber, De", in Fitzgerald A.D. (ed.), Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids, MI - Cambridge: 1999) 376-377, esp. 376.

allegorical or figurative, meaning, Book 12 concerns the interpretation of Paradise, or the third heaven, described by Paul in 2 *Corinthians* 12:2–4. How does this Paradise, Augustine invites the reader to ask, relate to the Paradise of Genesis, and further, how does the knowledge of Creation and of the Creator, available to Adam and Eve before the Fall, relate to the knowledge of heaven and earth and of God available to us? What sorts of knowing can the natural body exercise, and how is the knowledge thus produced to be differentiated from the episteme of the spirit ('spiritus') and the noesis of the intellect ('intelligentia')? The answers to these questions form part of a larger philosophical and theological project pursued jointly in *De Genesi* and *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*): Augustine attempts to explain how the incorporeal soul actively participates in the life of the material body, and he analogizes to this essential continuity of body and soul, the connection between human being and Godhead.

In Augustine's mature theory of sensation, as Margaret Miles has shown, the concept of *spiritus* serves to designate that part of the soul that mediates between its sensitive and intellectual parts, and thus, between body and soul on the one hand, soul and divinity on the other.⁵⁰ Augustine relies upon vision (and to some extent hearing) to clarify the nature of these parts and their mediating functions: sensory objects impress themselves upon the senses, giving rise to sense impressions that then rely upon the *spiritus* to provoke the faculty of sensation. The *spiritus* converts these impressions into visual images, picturing them so that the soul may know and ultimately judge and interpret what the body has seen. Sensation proper results from this creative act of the soul: the *spiritus* provides the imago (image), that alone is susceptible to the soul's higher faculties of knowing and remembering: 'Corporeal vision, indeed, does not oversee any operation of the other two kinds of vision [viz., spiritual and intellectual]; rather, the object perceived by it is announced to the spiritual vision, which acts as an overseer. For when an object is seen by the eyes, an image of it is immediately produced in the spirit. But this representation is not perceived unless we remove our eyes from the object that we were gazing at through the eyes and find an image of it within our

⁵⁰ Miles, *Augustine on the Body* 24. On Augustine's distinctive conception of *spiritus*, see also Hammond Taylor J., "The Meaning of *Spiritus* in St. Augustine's *De Genesi*, XII", *Modern Schoolman* 26 (1949) 211–218, and idem, *Literal Meaning of Genesis* 2:301–302; and on Augustine's threefold theory of vision and its relevance to the Christian codification of the visionary imagination, see Erickson C., *The Medieval Vision: Essays in History and Perception* (New York – Oxford: 1976) 29–47. Augustine's theory forms the basis of Richard of St. Victor's fourfold description of vision, on which see Nolan B., *The Gothic Visionary Perspective* (Princeton: 1977) 1–4; 38–83.

soul'.⁵¹ The spiritual image is fashioned from the soul's own substance ('substantiae suae'), as Augustine states in *De Trinitate*, when the initiating impressions arise from corporeal objects; in those rare instances, however, when the impressions are sent by the Holy Spirit and give access to the vision of God, the image entirely transcends the *spiritus* and instead appeals directly to the soul's highest faculties, which discern abstract entities without recourse to spiritual likenesses of sense impressions.⁵² Under normal conditions, however, Augustine views the three kinds of vision – corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual – as interlinked hierarchically: without spiritual vision, the corporeal vision of external objects would be imperceptible, for sensation derives from the activity of the *spiritus*, and without intellectual vision, the spiritual vision of likenesses would be fruitless, for these images could be known and remembered, but neither evaluated nor interpreted:

In one and the same soul, then, there are different visions: by means of the body it perceives objects such as the corporeal heaven and earth and everything that can be known in them in the degree that they are capable of being known; with the spirit it sees likenesses of bodies [...]; and with the mind it understands those realities that are neither bodies nor the likenesses of bodies. But there is, of course, a hierarchy in these visions, one being superior to another. For spiritual vision is more excellent than corporeal, and intellectual vision more excellent than spiritual. Corporeal vision cannot take place without spiritual, since at the very moment when we encounter a body by means of bodily sensation, there appears in the soul something not identical with the object perceived but resembling it. If this did not happen, there would be no sensation by which exterior objects are perceived. For it is not the body that perceives, but the soul by means

⁵¹ Hammond Taylor, *Literal Meaning of Genesis* 2:191. Cf. Agaësse – Solignac (eds. and trans.), *La Genèse au sens littéral* 2: 362: 'Corporalis sane visio nulli horum generi praesidet, sed quod per eam sentitur, illi spiritali tamquam praesidenti nuntiatur. Nam cum aliquid oculi cernitur, continuo fit imago eius in spiritu; sed non dinoscitur facta, nisi cum ablatis oculis ab eo, quod per oculos videbamus, imaginem eius in animo invenerimus'.

⁵² Migne J.-P. (ed.), Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi opera omnia, post Lovaniensium theologorum recensionem, 16 vols., Patrologiae cursus completus [...] ab aevo apostolico ad Innocentii III tempora 32–47 (Paris: 1841–1842), vol. VIII, col. 977: 'Et quia illa corpora sunt, quae foris per sensus carnis adamavit, eorumque diuturna quadam familiaritate implicata est, nec secum potest introrsum tanquam in regionem in corporeae naturae ipsa corpora inferre, imagines eorum convolvit, et rapit factas in semetipsa de semetipsa. Dat enim eis formandis quiddam substantiae suae: servat autem aliquid quo libere de specie talium imaginum judicet, et hoc est magis mens, id est rationalis intelligentia, quae servatur ut judicet. Nam illas animae partes quae corporum similitudinibus informantur, etiam cum bestiis nos communes habere sentimus'. Cf. McKenna S. (ed. and trans.), Saint Augustine, The Trinity, The Fathers of the Church 45 (Washington, DC: 1963) 301–302. On Augustine's notion that the soul fashions 'out of its own substance' the images of sensible things, see Miles, "Vision: Eye of the Body" 128, 135.

of the body; and the soul uses the body as a sort of messenger in order to form within itself the object that is called to its attention from the outside world. Hence corporeal vision cannot take place unless there is a concomitant spiritual vision [...]. Moreover, spiritual vision needs intellectual vision if a judgment is to be made upon its contents. 53

The model of vision that undergirds this analysis, as Miles demonstrates, is the theory of the visual ray that connects viewer and object.⁵⁴ Just as in physical vision, the will focuses *attentio* (attention), sending it forth to unite with selected objects of sight, so in spiritual vision, the will focuses *intentio* (intention) onto visual images – perceived, remembered, or imagined – with which the soul unites in sensation.⁵⁵ And so too, the longing for God, construed as the visual ray of the soul, focuses that form of will known as love onto the vision of God, with whose activity of divine love, human longing thus comes to be united.⁵⁶ To the extent that God, in this third mode of vision, is present neither in body nor likeness, his presence is known not corporeally or spiritually, but intellectually, as Augustine makes clear in his discussion of the vision of God granted to Moses and described in *Exodus* 33:21–23.⁵⁷ Augustine clearly conceives of the three

⁵³ Hammond Taylor, *Literal Meaning of Genesis* 2:213–214. Cf. Agaësse – Solignac (eds. and trans.), *La Genèse au sens littéral*, 2:414–416: 'Quamquam itaque in eadem anima fiant visiones, sive quae sentiuntur per corpus, sicut hoc corporeum caelum et terra et quaecumque in eis nota esse possunt, sive quae spiritu videntur similia corporum [...] sive cum mente intelleguntur, quae nec corpora sunt nec similitudines corporum, habent utique ordinem suum et est aliud alio praecellentius. Praestantior est enim visio spiritalis quam corporalis et rursus praestantior intellectualis quam spiritalis. Corporalis enim sine spiritali esse non potest, quandoquidem momento eodem, quo corpus sensu corporis tangitur, fit etiam in animo tale aliquid, non quod hoc sit, sed quod simile sit: quod si non fieret, nec sensus ille esset, quo ea, quae extrinsecus adiacent, sentiuntur. Neque enim corpus sentit, sed anima per corpus, quo velut nuntio utitur ad formandum in se ipsa, quod extrinsecus nuntiatur. Non potest itaque fieri visio corporalis, nisi etiam spiritalis simul fiat [...]. Item spiritalis visio indiget intellectuali, ut diiudicetur'.

⁵⁴ Miles, "Vision: Eye of the Body" 125–128.

⁵⁵ On attention as the focussing instrument of the will that unites viewer and object in corporeal vision, see ibid. 127–128; on *intentio* as the focussing instrument of the will in spiritual vision, see Miles, *Augustine on the Body* 26–27.

⁵⁶ On longing as the soul's visual ray, see Miles, "Vision: Eye of the Body" 134–135.

⁵⁷ Hammond Taylor (ed. and trans.), *Literal Meaning of Genesis* 2:217–218: 'Moses, as we read in Exodus, had yearned to see God, not as he had seen Him on the mountain, nor as he saw Him in the tabernacle, but in His divine essence without the medium of any bodily creature that might be presented to the senses of mortal flesh. It was his desire to see God, not by imaginary likenesses of bodies in the spirit but by a vision of the divine essence as far as this can be attained by a rational and intellectual creature when withdrawn from all bodily senses and from all obscure symbols of the spirit'. Cf. Agaësse – Solignac (eds. and trans.), *La Genèse au sens littéral* 2:424: 'Concupiverat enim, sicut in Exodo legimus, videre Deum, non utique sicut viderat in monte nec sicut videbat in tabernaculo, sed in ea

kinds of vision as analogous processes unified within a system of correspondence anchored in the paradigm of the visual ray. All three modes of viewing have the potential to unite viewer and viewed, and on this account, the same principle that attaches the beholder to the thing beheld also makes possible the soul's attachment to God.⁵⁸

In *De Genesi*, Augustine devotes particular attention to spiritual vision as the mediator that converts sense into sensation by means of visual images that represent sensory objects. *Spiritus*, as we have seen, reconciles body and soul, and the kind of vision it exercises mediates between the faculties of corporeal and intellectual vision. Augustine is very specific about the varieties of spiritual vision, and by implication, about the types of image such vision engenders. In the first place, he differentiates such images according to their source in the body, memory, or imagination:

But I think it is sufficient now to demonstrate this one fact, namely, that there exists in us a spiritual nature in which the likenesses of bodily things are formed. This spiritual nature functions when we come into contact with a body by means of our bodily senses, and the image of it is immediately formed in our spirit and stored in our memory; or when we think of bodies previously known but now absent, in order to form from them a spiritual vision of those things that were already in our spirit even before we began to think of them; or when we behold likenesses of bodies which we do not know but whose existence we do not doubt, not as they are in themselves but as they happen to present themselves to us; or when we arbitrarily and fancifully think of other objects that do not exist or whose existence is unknown to us; or when various forms of the likenesses of bodies come into our minds from any source whatever without our concurrence and against our will.⁵⁹

substantia, qua Deus est, nulla adsumta corporali creatura, quae mortalis carnis sensibus praesentetur, neque in spiritu figuratis similitudinibus corporum, sed per speciem suam, quantum eam capere creatura rationalis et intellectualis potest sevocata ab omni corporis sensu, ab omni significativo aenigmate spiritus'.

⁵⁸ The project of constructing a unified system of vision may derive from Augustine's commitment to reconciling Platonic idealism with the realist stance of scriptural prophecy, on which see Hessen J., *Die Philosophie des heiligen Augustinus* (Nuremberg: 1958) 9–22; and Macken R., "Henry of Ghent and Augustine", in Jordan M.D. – Emery K., Jr. (eds.), *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers*, Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies 3 (Notre Dame, IN – London: 1992) 251–274, esp. 252–253.

⁵⁹ Hammond Taylor (ed. and trans.), *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. II, 211–212. Cf. Agaësse – Solignac (eds. and trans.), *La Genèse au sens littéral*, vol. II, 410–412: 'Quod autem nunc insinuare satis arbitror, certum est esse spiritalem quandam naturam in nobis, ubi corporalium rerum formantur similitudines, sive cum aliquod corpus sensu corporis tangimus, et continuo formatur eius similitudo in spiritu memoriaque reconditur; sive cum absentia corpora iam nota cogitamus, ut ex eis formetur quidam spiritalis aspectus, quae iam erant in spiritu et antequam ea cogitaremus sive cum eorum corporum, quae

In the second place, he distinguishes between the ordering and disordering functions of spiritual vision. On the one hand, it anticipates all bodily actions, previewing them in thought, sometimes before the action is performed, at other times during it. On the other, the spirit fashions the images we dream, both in waking and in sleep; in sickness, its images may be mistaken for the things they represent, so that virtual bodies become confused with actual ones; and the same may hold true when the spirit, hampered by bodily illness or suffering, exists in a state of unconsciousness deeper than sleep.60 Likewise, when the soul is seized by a foreign spirit ('rapiente aliquo spiritu'), malevolent or otherwise, it can be made to confuse images with objects, and this may occur even while the soul is entirely removed from the bodily senses.⁶¹ Ecstatic vision is yet another subset of the spiritual, although this species of vision can shade into the intellectual: 'But when the attention of the mind is completely carried off and turned away from the senses of the body, then there is rather the state called ecstasy. Then any bodies that are present are not seen at all, though the eyes may be wide open; and no sounds at all are heard. The whole soul is intent upon images of bodies present to spiritual vision or upon incorporeal realities present to intellectual vision without benefit of bodily images'.62 In such a rapturous state, 'it is by virtue of divine guidance and assistance that [the soul] realizes it is seeing in a spiritual way not bodies but the likenesses of bodies'.63 Trained on the likenesses of

non novimus, sed tamen esse non dubitamus, similitudines non ita ut sunt illa, sed ut occurrit, intuemur; sive cum alia, quae vel non sunt vel esse nesciuntur, pro arbitrio vel opinatione cogitamus; sive unde unde neque id agentibus neque volentibus nobis variae formae corporalium similitudinum versantur in animo'.

⁶⁰ Hammond Taylor (ed. and trans.), *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. II, 212. Cf. Agaësse – Solignac (eds. and trans.), *La Genèse au sens littéral*, vol. II, 412.

⁶¹ Hammond Taylor (ed. and trans.), *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. II, 212–213. Cf. Agaësse – Solignac (eds. and trans.), *La Genèse au sens littéral*, vol. II, 412–414.

⁶² Hammond Taylor (ed. and trans.), *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. II, 194. Cf. Agaësse – Solignac (eds. and trans.), *La Genèse au sens littéral*, vol. II, 368: 'Quando autem penitus avertitur atque abripitur animi intentio a sensibus corporis, tunc magis dici extasis solet. Tunc omnino quaecumque sint praesentia corpora etiam patentibus oculis non videntur nec ullae voces prorsus audiuntur: totus animi contuitus aut in corporum imaginibus est per spiritalem aut in rebus incorporeis nulla corporis imagine figuratis per intellectualem visionem'.

⁶³ Hammond Taylor (ed. and trans.), *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. II, 216. Cf. Agaësse – Solignac (eds. and trans.), *La Genèse au sens littéral*, vol. II, 420: 'iam divinae admonitionis est et adiutorii, ut se non corpora, sed visa corporum similia spiritaliter noverit cernere'. Augustine's insistent attention to the representational properties of visionary experience would prove seminal to the portrayal of visions in Spanish art of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; on the ways in which pictorial representation and visionary

visible things, the many types of spiritual vision that Augustine catalogues attach to images beheld, recalled, or fancied.

This incomparably varied catalogue underlies the rich assortment of spiritual images inventoried by Ribadeneyra in the Vita Ignatii Loyolae. His impulse to discriminate amongst the images Ignatius was privileged to behold - exemplary, vestigial, sacramental, ecstatic, visionary, revelatory, apparitional, curative, consolatory, meditative – descends from Augustine's exhaustive review of spiritual vision in *De Genesi*. In actual fact, Ribadeneyra categorizes spiritual imagery more comprehensively than Augustine, focussing less on the nature of spiritus and more on the specifics of type and function to be discerned from detailed examination of Ignatius's visual experiences, but the criteria he applies can be traced more often than not to the usage of his forebear. Take the attention he bestows on bodily and spiritual vision as distinguishable processes that are yet exercised jointly in the Church of Our Lady at Manresa, where Ignatius discerns the Holy Trinity by projecting an external version of the internal image he beholds with the oculi mentis. This complex phenomenon is a specific instance of a general class described by Augustine, comprising possible relations between corporeal and spiritual vision:

From all such objects we distinguish the bodies which we see and which are present to our senses, so that we have no doubt that these are bodies and that the others are images of bodies. But it may sometimes be that [...] the images of bodies are produced in the spirit just as if bodies were present to the senses of the body, though the attention of the soul may meanwhile remain alert even in the bodily senses. In this case images of bodies are seen appearing in the spirit, and real bodies are perceived through the eyes. The result is that at the same time one man who is present will be seen with the eyes and another who is absent will be seen in the spirit as if with the eyes.⁶⁴

In plate 4, scene A, of the *Vita beati sancti patris Ignatii Loyolae*, the ray that attaches the saint's eyes to the Trinitarian image, suggesting how it

experience were mutually troped to describe the encounter with the transcendent, see Stoichita V.I., Visionary Experience in the Golden Age of Spanish Art (London: 1995) 11–77.

⁶⁴ Hammond Taylor (ed. and trans.), *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. II, 193–194. Cf. Agaësse – Solignac (eds. and trans.), *La Genèse au sens littéral*, vol. II, 366–368: 'Ab his omnibus ita discernimus illa corporalia, quae videmus et in quibus praesentibus sunt sensus corporis nostri, ut non dubitemus haec esse corpora, illas vero imagines corporum. Cum autem [...] corporalium rerum in spiritu exprimuntur imagines, tamquam ipsis corporis sensibus corpora praesententur manente tamen etiam in sensibus corpora ipsa per corpus, ita ut simul cernatur et homo aliquis prasens oculis et absens alius spiritu tamquam oculis'.

impresses itself from without, but also how the spiritual image is projected from within, illustrates Augustine's notion that the object of vision imprints itself upon the viewer's eves and soul, inciting the spiritus to fashion a spiritual likeness of that very object, that is, a similitude visibly brought forth in spiritu [Fig. 5].65 Even so, Ribadeneyra inflects Augustine, rather than merely following him, for the external image that allows Ignatius to see with bodily eyes what the oculi mentis already behold, originates as a complement to spiritual vision, rather than instigating it, howsoever instantaneously. The intensity with which Ignatius gazes at the Trinitarian image indicates the strength of his *intentio*: here as elsewhere in the series, the concentration he expends on sacred images, whether external or internal, corporeal or spiritual, indicates that his soul longs in the utmost degree for unity with Jesus, whose image he conceives and with whom he identifies. Put in Augustinian terms, his mind attentively binds itself to these images with so strong a love as even to regard itself as something of the same kind [...] it is made like them'.⁶⁶ This condition of divine love becomes especially apparent in plate 6, scene C, in which Ignatius precisely imitates the striding attitude of Christ revealed to him in a spiritual image [Fig. 7].

In the same church at Manresa, the vision of the *verum corpus*, apparent only to the *oculi mentis*, illustrates another subset of the spiritual image: 'the likenesses of bodies which we do not know but whose existence we do not doubt, not as they are in themselves but as they happen to present themselves to us'. ⁶⁷ Another version of the spiritual image appears in plate 1, scene A, the reflexive vision of St. Peter at Loyola: that Ignatius, to paraphrase Ribadeneyra, seems to himself to be viewing the saint's visitation, as if in an image, indicates that this is a special case of spiritual rapture, as defined by Augustine [Fig. 2]. Divinely illuminated, Ignatius's soul 'realizes that it is seeing in a spiritual way not bodies but the likenesses of bodies'. ⁶⁸ Several episodes – the visions of St. Peter and of the Virgin and

⁶⁵ Migne (ed.), Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi opera omnia, vol. VIII, cols. 988–989, 990–991. Cf. McKenna (ed. and trans.), The Trinity 322–324, 326–329. On the mutual effect of vision on viewer and viewed, see Miles, "Vision: Eye of the Body" 127–128, 136.

⁶⁶ Migne (ed.), *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi opera omnia*, vol. VIII, col. 978: 'se istis imaginibus tanto amore conjungit, ut etiam se esse aliquid hujusmodi existimet [...] conformatur eis quodam modo'. Cf. McKenna (ed. and trans.), *The Trinity* 302. On the mimetic tendency that causes the mind to construe itself as something like the images to which it is attached, see Miles, "Vision: Eye of the Body" 128.

⁶⁷ See note 59 above.

⁶⁸ See note 63 above.

Child at Loyola (plate 1, scenes A and C), of Christ at Jerusalem (plate 6, scene C), and of God the Father at La Storta (plate 10, scene A) – concern ecstatic vision, in which the 'whole soul is intent upon images of bodies present to spiritual vision', to the exclusion of the bodily senses [Figs. 2, 7, & 11].⁶⁹ Like the utterly transforming Marian vision, the consoling vision of Christ at Jerusalem, that makes Ignatius insensible to his rough treatment, conforms very explicitly to this definition, whereas the vision of Christ at La Storta, since it appeals both to bodily eyes and the *oculi men*tis, does not. On the other hand, the illustrationes experienced beside the river at Manresa, where Ignatius saw neither any likeness nor any image perceptible to sense, but rather discerned and understood divine mysteries, the eyes of his mind having been fully opened, pertains clearly to that form of ecstasy in which the 'whole soul is intent [...] upon incorporeal realities present to intellectual vision without benefit of bodily images'.70 In those instances when Ribadeneyra describes images without parallel in De Genesi, such as the vision at La Storta that compounds several species of spiritual image - visio, visum, and illustratio - his terminology and more importantly his fundamental conception of such imagery continues to derive from Augustine. In like manner, his interest in the relation between internal and external images and their myriad inflections, though it surpasses Augustine's, stems from his exposition of the dynamics of corporeal and spiritual vision. Underlying the whole of Ribadeneyra's Vita Ignatii Loyolae is an intense awareness of the distinction between body and spirit as sources of sensation, and congruently between bodily and spiritual images. The Vita beati patris Ignatii Loyolae translates these distinctions, finding pictorial counterparts for them. The antithesis drawn between the false image of the serpent and the true image of the Cross (plate 3, scene D), for example, the former a corporeal image masquerading as a spiritual one, the latter both corporeal and truly spiritual, gives very strong evidence of this Augustinian fascination with kinds and degrees of sacred imagery [Fig. 4]. Ribadeneyra's attention to such visual categories, and his subtle manipulation of them, is grounded, as I hope to have shown, in a creative reading of Augustine's De Genesi. Conversely, the rich theory of vision and its modes formulated in Book 12 provides the basis for the types of corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual image delineated in the pictorial Vita.

⁶⁹ See note 62 above.

⁷⁰ See note 62 above.

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PART TWO

PATHWAYS TO THE DIVINE: THE LOWER SENSES

'AN ODOUR. A TASTE. A TOUCH. IMPOSSIBLE TO DESCRIBE': NOLI ME TANGERE AND THE SENSES*

Barbara Baert

On a demandé: comment toucher au corps?

Mais ce qu'il faut dire,
c'est que cela – toucher au corps, toucher le corps,
toucher enfin – arrive tout le temps dans l'écriture.

(Jean-Luc Nancy, Corpus [2000] 12)

What does he do? How does he bring her to life? Very cautiously. He wants her to become conscious, and, holding the rather simple theory that all knowledge comes from the senses, decides to open her sensorium. Slowly, slowly. He will give her, to begin with, just one of the senses. And which does he pick? Not sight, noblest of the senses, not hearing – well, no need to run through the whole list, short as it is. Let's hasten to relate that he first awards her, perhaps ungenerously, the most primitive sense, that of smell. (Perhaps he does not want to be seen, at least not yet). [...] There are odors she does not smell, because she is in a garden – or because she is in the past. [...] She begins to dream, this consciousness-that-smells, of how she could retain the odors, by storing them up inside herself, so she would never lose them. And this is how, later, space emerges, inner space only. [...] Every pleasure – and smelling whatever she smells, is pure pleasure – becomes an experience of anticipated loss. She wants, if only she knew how, to become a collector.¹

In her book *The Volcano Lover: A Romance* Susan Sontag introduces a variation on the Pygmalion myth narrated by Ovid (43 BC–17 AD).² The

^{*} The title quotes Sontag S., *The Volcano Lover: A Romance* (New York: 1992) 46–47. This essay is written in the context of the project *Mary Magdalene and the Touching of Jesus. An Intra- and Interdisciplinary Investigation of the Interpretation of John 20: 17*, of the Fundings for Scientific Research – Flanders, involving the department of Art History and the faculty of Theology at the Catholic University of Leuven. I am grateful to my research assistants Liesbet Kusters and Niels Schalley.

¹ Sontag, The Volcano Lover 46-47.

² From Hill D.E. (ed.), *Ovid. Metamorphoses IX–XII* (Warminster: 1999) vs. 293–296, 244–297. Opinions differ as to the etymology of Pygmalion. It is in any case not a Greek name, and perhaps derives from the Phoenicians, who worshipped a deity called *Pumayelyon*. Phoenician influences on Cypriot cults are known. Virgil's Pygmalion, the brother of Dido (*Aeneid* 1:347), has nothing to do with this namesake. See: Dörrie H., *Pygmalion. Ein Impuls Ovids und seine Wirkungen bis in die Gegenwart*, Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie

lover wishes to shape his beloved, to model her to his ideal. He instructs her, loves her, indeed reawakens her to life. This reawakening to a new life is described as the opening of her sensorium. The lover first gives the girl the most primal, but perhaps also the most sensuous of the senses: the sense of smell. It is scent that gives her consciousness and desire. It is scent that opens up an inner space to receive all the rest. It is scent that makes her a collector.

Susan Sontag proposes the idea that the sensorium is radically tied to love and the desire to collect, to know. Senses, love, and knowledge seem to form an archetypical node. In this passage, Sontag suggests a hierarchy that contradicts the ancient model of Plato and Aristotle, for whom epistemology begins with sight (rather than smell), and descends by way of seeing, hearing, smell, taste, and touch (visus, auditus, olfactus, gustus, and tactus). The Greeks considered truth an idea (eidos) having a visible form. Knowledge (eidenai) is a matter of seeing, as theory is related to theatre.³ In this essay I turn to an iconographic theme that both theoretically and spiritually manifests the role of the senses in an exceptionally energizing way: the *Noli me tangere*. I defend the position that the prohibition of touch extended to all the senses and that the Noli me tangere thereby came to reflect an early modern view of the full sensorium, with knowledge not limited solely to seeing or to (not) touching, but including 'lower' forms of experience such as taste and smell. An approach by way of the multisensory character of the *Noli me tangere* iconography can provide a breakthrough in a puzzle that has long stumped exegetes and art historians, namely that the *Noli me tangere* is in fact a negative principle. What was its meaning? What could be the purpose of a prohibition of touch?

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³ On the hierarchy of the senses, see Nordenfalk C., "The Five Senses in Flemish Art before 1600", in Cavalli-Björkman G. (ed.), *Netherlandish Mannerism* (Stockholm: 1985) 135–154; Demasure K., "Noli me tangere: A Contribution to the Reading of Jn 20:17 Based on a Number of Philosophical Reflections on Touch", *Louvain Studies* 32 (2007) 304–329, 307–309; Jonas H., "The Nobility of Sight: A Study in the Phenomenology of the Senses", in Jonas H. (ed.), *The Phenomenology of Life: Towards a Philosophical Biology* (Chicago: 1982) 135–156.

1. Me mou haptou and Tactility

In *John* 20:17 the original Greek text reads: *Me mou haptou*.⁴ The Greek verb *haptein* is the most general verb for touching, but also means 'to approach', 'to be in contact with something or someone' or to touch emotionally (both in a friendly and in an inimical way). The connotation 'to grasp', 'to cling', or 'to clutch' is not found in the biblical occurrences of this verb. Comparative research of the frequency and the contextual meaning of the verb *haptein*, has shown a cultic meaning (*Ex.* 29:37) or a taboo of touch (*Leviticus* and *Numbers*) between people, things, and dead bodies.⁵ Whatever it may be, the Vulgate rendered *Me mou haptou* as *Noli me tangere*. Even though the Latin verb *tangere* also has a broad spectrum of meanings (including 'to enter or reach a place'), *Noli me tangere* has definitely been understood in the West as a problem related to tactility. The 'prohibition of touching' has been the starting point of a long visual tradition which is characterised by that fascinating, condensed, almost frozen energy, where the senses play an important role.

The reason for the prohibition on touching is a crux in the history of the interpretation of the *Noli me tangere*. In *John* 20:17 Jesus himself offers a possible explanation: 'because I am not yet ascended to my Father'. Medieval and early modern exegesis, on the authority of Augustine (354–430), accepts that *Noli me tangere* refers to the transformation of the belief in Christ as *a human being* into the belief in Christ as *God*. According to this interpretation, the paired concepts of touching/non-touching correspond

⁴ For an overview of different exegetical interpretations of this phrase, see Bieringer R., "Noli me tangere and the New Testament", in Baert B. – Bieringer R. – Demasure K. – Eynde I. van den (eds.), Noli me tangere. Mary Magdalene: One Person, Many Images (Louvain: 2006) 16–28.

⁵ Bieringer R., "Nader Mij niet: De betekenis van mê mou haptou in Johannes 20:17", *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 61 (2005) 19–43.

⁶ For historical-critical studies of *John* 20:17, see Dupont A. – Depril W., "Marie-Madeleine et Jean 20, 17 dans la littérature patristique latine", *Augustiniana* 56 (2006) 159–182; Atwood R., *Mary Magdalene in the New Testament Gospels and Early Tradition* (Bern: 1993) 147–218; Nürnberg R., "Apostolae Apostolorum: Die Frauen am Grab als erste Zeuginnen der Auferstehung in der Väterexegese", in Schöllgen G. – Scholten C. (eds.), *Stimuli: Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für Ernst Dassmann, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Ergänzungsband 23 (Munich: 1996) 228–242; Attridge H.W., "Don't Be Touching Me': Recent Feminist Scholarship on Mary Magdalene", in Levine A.-J. (ed.), *A Feminist Companion to John*, Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings, 5, 2 (London – New York: 2003) 140–166.

⁷ Sermo 246 and his Epistola 120; Teshe R.J. – Boniface R., Letters 100–155 (London: 2003) 129–140, 137. This line of reasoning was followed in Epistula 50 by Paulinus of Nola

to the double nature of Christ. The risen and therefore divine body is out of bounds.⁸ The statement 'Noli me tangere' expresses the final chord of the arrival and return of God. Thus, the *Noli me tangere* positions the body of Christ within an anthropology of the incarnation, the cycle of salvation, and the divine aura.⁹

The first exegetes also recognised a gender issue in the paired concepts of touching/non-touching. According to Ambrose of Milan (d. 397), Mary Magdalene was prohibited from touching Christ because, at that moment, she lacked the capacity to grasp Christ in his risen and divine form. He compares the Mary of *John* 20 with Eve: if the first sin was committed by a woman, the first person to see the risen Christ will also be a woman. Furthermore, the point suggests an ellipsis of the other prohibition of touch that God issues with regard to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (*Gen.* 3:3): You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die'. As we know, that was the command that Eve broke. The passage allows us to deduce that the sense of touch, at least in this archetypal context, can lead to a higher knowledge, a forbidden knowledge, the mystery of God himself: 'Prohibition against touch in Genesis has to do with the acquisition of knowledge that belongs to God'. Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235) proposed

^{(355–431);} Paulinus of Nola, *Epistulae. Paulinus von Nola*, Fontes Christiani 25, 3, ed. M. Skeb (Freiburg: 1998) 1042–1075, 1067.

⁸ Of course, this point of view contrasts with the passage of *John* 20:24–31, where Thomas does touch the body of the risen Christ. When Thomas touches the wound, he feels and believes on the basis of a touch that *satisfies* him. The story of Thomas relies on the verification principle of the tactile sense and the *testis* argument, of which there are variations. The men of Emmaus do not recognise Christ by his voice, nor by touch, but by the dramatic action of the breaking of the bread (see Fig. 2). Mary Magdalene already believed (why would she need to touch?), but she still had to integrate the insight into the cycle of the Resurrection by renouncing an overly narrow physical concept: the human body of Christ. *Noli me tangere* is therefore more than the story of Thomas, because the first passage also explicates the meaning of the incarnation. For a further elaboration, see Schneiders S.M., "Touching the Risen Jesus: Mary Magdalene and Thomas the Twin in John 20", in *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 61 (2006) 13–35; Rafanelli L.M., "Seeking Truth and Bearing Witness: The Noli me tangere and Incredulity of Thomas on Tino di Camaiano's Petroni Tomb (1313–1317)", *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 37 (2006) 32–64.

⁹ These reflections are continued by Nancy J.-L., *Noli me tangere: Essai sur la levée du corps* (Paris: 2003) 28, n. 2: 'ce qui ne doit pas être touché, c'est le corps ressuscité'.

Attridge, "'Don't Be Touching Me'".

¹¹ Ambrose of Milan, *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 14 (Turnhout: 1957) 345–400.

¹² Demasure, "Noli me tangere" 327.

a more woman-friendly meaning of the *Noli me tangere*. He connected *John* 20:17 with the *Song of Songs* 3:1–4.¹³ Just like Martha, Mary is the *apostola apostolorum*, sent by Christ himself to redeem Eve's sin. Mary Magdalene is *Ecclesia*, the proclaimer of salvation, or the New Eve. She seeks her bridegroom, as the Church seeks her faithful.

The Codex Egberti (Reichenau, ca. 977–993), which illustrates the text of *John* 20:11–18, is considered one of the earliest certain representations of the *Noli me tangere* [Fig. 1].¹⁴ The epigraphy refers to Mary as she

¹³ In canticum canticorum 25, 2, 45; Garitte G., Traités d'Hippolyte sur David et Goliath, sur le cantique des cantiques et sur l' antéchrist – version Géorgienne, Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium 264 (Louvain: 1965) 45–49; see also Saxer V., "Marie Madeleine dans le commentaire d'Hippolyte sur le cantique des cantiques", Revue bénédictine 101 (1991) 219–239.

Trier, Stadtbibliothek, codex 24, fol. 91; Schiel H., Codex Egberti der Stadtbibliothek Trier (Basel: 1960); Ronig F.J., "Erläuterungen zu den Miniaturen des Egbert Codex", in Der Egbert Codex. Das Leben Jesu: Ein Höhepunkt der Buchmalerei vor 1000 Jahren (Stuttgart: 2005) 78-188. For the iconographic corpus see: Schiller G., Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst 3, Die Auferstehung und Erhöhung Christi (Gütersloh: 1971) 88-98; Mosco M., La Maddalena tra sacro e profano: Da Giotto a De Chirico (Florence: 1986) 135-145, considers examples from the sixteenth century; Sebastiani L., Trasfigurazione. Il personaggio evangelico di Maria di Magdala e il mito della peccatrice redenta nella tradizione occidentale (Brescia: 1992) 240, erroneously claims that the Noli me tangere possesses an iconography that does not change; Haskins S., Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor (London: 1993), presents a Wirkungsgeschichte of the figure, with attention to the visual arts, but does not discuss Noli me tangere iconography. Alphant M. – Lafon G. – Arasse D. (eds.), L'excès des images: L'apparition à Marie-Madeleine (Paris: 2001) 79-126, offers aesthetic considerations of the Titianesque Noli me tangere; Apostolos-Cappadonna D., In Search of Mary Magdalene: Images and Traditions (New York; 2002), also considers later examples of the Noli me tangere. Nancy, Noli me tangere, presents a theological-philosophical discourse on the Noli me tangere as paradox; Tarnow U., "'Noli me tangere': Zur Problematik eines visuellen Topos und seiner Transformationen im Cinquecento", in Frank T. (ed.), Topik und Tradition: Prozesse der Neuordnung von Wissensüberlieferungen des 13. bis 17. Jahrhunderts (Göttingen: 2007) 209-225, is a recent semiotic reading of the Titian's Noli me tangere; Suthor N., "Bad Touch? Zum Körpereinsatz in Michelangelo/Pontormos 'Noli me tangere' und Caravaggios 'Ungläubigem Thomas'", in Rosen V. von (ed.), Der stumme Diskurs der Bilder: Reflexionsformen des Ästhetischen in der Kunst der Frühen Neuzeit (Munich: 2003) 261-281, also discusses semiotic consequences of the corporeal treatment of the Noli me tangere versus the Thomas episode; in Baert B., "Touching with the Gaze: A Visual Analysis of the Noli me tangere", in Baert - Bieringer - Demasure - Eynde (eds.), Noli me tangere 43-52, aspects of the relationship between text and image are confronted with exegesis. Baert B. – Kusters L., "The Twilight Zone of the Noli me tangere: Contributions to the History of the Motif in Western Europe (ca. 400-ca. 1000)", Louvain Studies 32 (2008) 255–308, is a study of the complicated genesis of *Noli me tangere* in iconography. In Baert B., "Noli me tangere or the Untouchable Body: Five Exercises in the Prohibition on Touching", Annual of the Antwerp Royal Museum (2007) 8-21, the notion of the gaze in the Noli me tangere is explored from the perspective of image theory. The following dissertations have not been published: Trotzig A., Christus Resurgens Apparet Mariae Magdalenae: En



Fig. 1. *Noli me tangere, Codex Egberti* (Reichenau, ca. 977–993). Trier, Stadtbibliothek (codex 24, fol. 911). Image © Stadtbibliothek.

ikonografisk studie med tonvikt pa motivets framställning in den tidiga medeltidens konst, PhD dissertation (Stockholm: 1973); LaRow M., The Iconography of Mary Magdalene: The Evolution in Western Tradition until 1300, PhD dissertation (New York University: 1982); Lehmann M., Die Darstellungen des Noli me tangere in der italienischen Kunst vom 12. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert: Eine ikonographische Studie, PhD dissertation (s.l.: 1988); Robertson C.L., Gender Relations and the Noli me tangere Scene in Renaissance Italy, MA thesis (University of Victoria: 1993). With the author's permission, we were able to consult: Rafanelli L.M., The Ambiguity of Touch: Saint Mary Magdalene and the Noli me Tangere' in Early Modern Italy, PhD dissertation (New York University, Institute of Fine Arts: 2004).

is mentioned in *John* 20:16.¹⁵ The composition of the miniature in the Codex Egberti is divided in the middle by a slender tree. On the left is a simple representation of the tomb: angels holding a staff at each end of an empty sarcophagus. 16 The winding sheet lies in the hollow of the tomb. The angels watch Christ and Mary Magdalene and guide our gaze to the core of the event. Mary Magdalene kneels near the tree-trunk, her arms extended in the direction of Christ's feet. Christ inclines toward Mary Magdalene and points to her. In his left hand he holds a book; he is the Logos. Mary Magdalene's bowing pose derives from the prototype of the *Noli me tangere* in early Christian and Carolingian art, namely the *Chairete*, wherein the women at the sepulchre take hold of Jesus' feet (*Matt.* 28:9: 'And they came to Him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped Him'), as in a now lost paleo-Christian sarcophagus.¹⁷ The paleo-Christian modelled pose, when transposed to the context of *Noli me tangere*, assumes a different meaning: we see her bowing now in response to the prohibition to touch. 18 The art historian and specialist in the history of gestures, Moshe Barasch, describes the creation of *Noli me tangere* as a particular example

¹⁵ However, in this period, Mary was already understood as a conflation of different women mentioned in the gospels. In his sermon of 21 September 591, in the church of San Clemente in Rome, Gregory the Great (560–604) identified Mary (Magdalene) as the sinner in *Luke* 7:36–50 for the first time. Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 141, ed. R. Etaix (Turnhout: 1999) hom. 33. The Venerable Bede (672–735) adds the sister of Lazarus to this cluster; Venerable Bede, *In Marci Evangelium expositio, Bedae Venerabilis Opera* 2, Opera exegetica 3, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 120, ed. D. Hurst (Turnhout: 1960) 606; Venerable Bede, *In Lucae Evangelium expositio, Bedae Venerabilis Opera* 2, Opera exegetica 3, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 120, ed. D. Hurst (Turnhout: 1960) 413: 'Maria Magdalene ipsa est soror Lazari'. Bede calls the sinner in Luke *meretrix* (and she is now also understood as the woman in the *Noli me tangere*).

¹⁶ It would be possible to read a convention which reminds of the Holy of Holies (as for instance the Arc of the Covenant) in the symmetric position of the angels near the grave. I thank Anastasia Keshman for this suggestion.

¹⁷ Matthew 28:8–10. The encounter between Christ and a single Mary (Magdalene) does not occur before 850. Before the middle of the ninth century, the story of the Resurrection was depicted by showing the myrrhophores near the tomb, on the one hand, and/or Christ's appearance to two myrrhophores, the Chairete on the other hand. The essential question is thus whether or not the particular passage in John was initially suppressed, and why. Lisa Marie Rafanelli holds the opinion that the passage was deliberately neglected in the visual arts; Rafanelli, The Ambiguity of Touch. The myrrhophores and the Chairete would ultimately provide the basic characteristics of later Noli me tangere iconography. An exception would be a disputable Noli me tangere on the so-called Brivio capsella (a silver reliquary) from the early Christian period, preserved in Paris, Musée du Louvre; see Noga-Banai G., The Trophies of the Martyrs: An Art Historical Study of Early Christian Silver Reliquaries (Oxford: 2008) 38–61, fig. 3.

¹⁸ Barasch M., Giotto and the Language of Gesture (Cambridge: 1987) 170.

of 'energetic inversion'. ¹⁹ 'Energetic inversion' is the power of a gesture to become a formal-artistic recipient of various emotions and their shifting interpretations across the history of art. In the history of gesture, the *Noli me tangere* constitutes such a force field.

The exceptional power of the momentum captured in these three words was also the subject of monastic comments, such as those of the Sermo in veneratione Mariae Magdalenae (823–834) from Cluny: here Noli *me tangere* is interpreted as the necessary and ultimate step to insight in the mystery of the resurrection.²⁰ The text was read on 22 July, the feast day of Mary Magdalene, and influenced hymns, 21 lauds, and dramaturgical rites. This is evidenced, for instance, by the phrase 'Quem queritis in sepulchro, o Christicole' ('Who do you seek in the grave, O followers of Christ'), known from a Limoges manuscript dating to ca. 923-934.²² The Sermo, also known as the Vita evangelica, was a critical text in the new 'personality formation' of Mary Magdalene. Its central theme is the transformation of sin into perfection. Mary Magdalene's tears of remorse (Luke 7:36-50) form the necessary tabula rasa for what she achieves in the Noli me tangere. In the injunction against touch, she recognizes and acknowledges the assimilation of Father and Son and becomes the first proclaimer of the Church, a Church fragrant as the scent of her balsam. Mary Magdalene's remorse is the necessary precondition for the revolution in the history of salvation after the Fall. According to the influential Sermo, the Noli me tangere is thus the ultimate goal of the revelation, of

¹⁹ Barasch, Giotto 170.

²⁰ Marrier M. – Duchêne A., *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis* (Paris: 1614) 131–138. The origin could be Vézelay, ca. 1040. The *sermo* was used monastically with liturgical adaptation through the use of twelve readings; Iogna-Prat D., "La Madeleine du 'Sermo in veneratione sanctae Mariae Magdalenae' attribué à Odon de Cluny", *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. Moyen Âge* 104 (1992) 37–79, at 41–42.

²¹ Szövérffy J., "Peccatrix Quondam Femina: A Survey of the Mary Magdalen Hymns", *Traditio* 19 (1963) 79–146, at 86, 92. The earliest hymns originated in Burgundy, Bourges, and southern Germany (where our Ottonian manuscripts were also created) in the tenth and eleventh centuries; the most important key words in the hymn are *peccatrix*, *collega apostolorum*, *soror apostolorum*, *meretrix impudica*, *Maria poenitens*, *sponsa*, *amica Dei*, *fons*.

²² Young K., *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (Oxford: 1933). The text in question is a dialogue (ibid. 202): 'Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o caelicolae' ('Jesus, the Nazarene, the crucified, o angels'); 'Non est hic, surrexit sicut praedixerat; ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro' ('He is not here, he is risen, as he predicted; go and announce that he has risen from the grave'). The content is derived from *Matthew* 28:5–10, *Mark* 16:5–7, and *Luke* 24:4–6. The dialogue form is inspired by choir songs from contemporary liturgy (ibid. 203–204). The version in its original form is the text described above, which occurs in a manuscript in Sankt Gallen and dates to the middle of the tenth century (ibid. 204–205). With thanks to Isabelle Vanden Hove.

the insight – the *salutifera doctrina* – attained by means of penitence and internal remorse. 23 This interpretation of remorse, conversion, and final insight became highly influential in the medieval and early-modern iconographic and literary tradition.

2. From the Ban on Touch to Spiritual Seeing

Where touch is banned, sight is stimulated. This seems to become the important paradigm of *Noli me tangere*. In this part I will develop the interpretation of the process of transformation by which the prohibition of touch becomes a 'higher vision' through a thorough analysis of word and image. Are there accents and discontinuities in the Gospel of John that the visual medium emphasizes or ignores, and that pushed the *Noli me tangere* in the direction of an iconography of exchanged gazes? Thinking this through: did the paradigm of sight, as it arose in the interspace of Scripture and its artistic representation, also become the spokesperson of a model of knowledge that bases itself (solely) on sight? Is this seeing, given the religious theme and the viewer's experience of it, a different, higher seeing? And how will the importance of the gaze in the *Noli me tangere* tell us something about painting itself, that as a medium fits precisely in the lee of touch, but in the full light of vision? And does the importance of the gaze here displace the other senses?

I will use the Puccio di Simone fresco of 1340 in the Santa Trinita in Florence as a test case [Fig. 2]. It is considered to be the oldest autonomous *Noli me tangere* on a large scale. The earlier *Noli me tangere* images by Giotto in Assisi and Padua are in fact part of a cyclical context.²⁴ The fresco in Santa Trinita is painted in a recess of the vault of the funerary monument for the Strozzi family, dedicated to St. Lucia. Mary Magdalene is kneeling before Christ. She is wearing a red dress. Her hair is golden blonde and hangs untied. Christ, dressed in a white tunic, is walking away from her with a dramatic gesture. While his body and feet are already turned away from her, his thumb almost touches Mary Magdalene's index

 $^{^{23}}$ Iogna-Prat, "La Madeleine" 56. In the mass of 22 July, one prays to be able to 'see' the majesty of Christ-Sol. The internal pain is necessary for achieving and disseminating personal salvation.

²⁴ Rafanelli, *The Ambiguity of Touch* 159–164, fig. 26; Borsook E., *The Mural Painters of Tuscany from Cimabue to Andrea del Sarto* (Oxford: 1980) 41. There is a strong affinity with the Giottesque *Noli me tangere* in the Cappella Scrovegni in Padua.



Fig. 2. Puccio di Simone, Noli me tangere (1340). Fresco, 118 \times 220 cm. Florence, Santa Trinita. Image © Santa Trinita.

finger. Christ is carrying a rake in his other hand. To the left, we can see the open tomb in a cave. The background is cut off by the dark depths of a forest.

In a recent exegetical study, Reimund Bieringer has analysed the linguistic frequency and intensity of words for seeing.²⁵ The verb *parakyptô* or *inclinasset* ('inspect', 'bending over', *John* 20:5, 11) forms a *Klammer*, a

²⁵ Bieringer R., "'They Have Taken Away My Lord': Text-Immanent Repetitions and Variations in John 20: 1–18", in Belle G. van (ed.), *Repetitions and Variations in the Fourth Gospel: Style, Text, Interpretation*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium (Louvain: 2008) 609–630.

link between the verbs of movement and the verbs of seeing. Verbs of seeing proper are $blep\hat{o}$: 'noticing' the empty tomb (20:1, 5). $The\hat{o}re\hat{o}$ – to 'observe' something with continuity and attention, often with the implication that what is observed is something unusual – is used for looking carefully at the gardener (20:6, 12, 14). And $hora\hat{o}$ (esp. perfect: $he\hat{o}raka$) is seeing the risen Christ with the eyes of faith, as if in a flash (20:8, 18). 'This latter form expresses a seeing that transcends the mere physical seeing to a seeing with the eyes of faith and thus forms the climax of the pericope'. However, in the Vulgate these three terms of sight were all translated with the verb videre, which means a loss of the nuances in John's original Greek text. Nevertheless, it is clear that the verb of seeing in view of its frequency and its position in the narrative structure remains very significant. At least we can say that Mary's important role was her eyewitnessing the risen Christ. 27

A second important text-immanent element is the rupture in the narrative at verse 11 concerning action and movement. Before verse 11, the tomb is the point of reference to which and from which all the movement occurs. The noun 'to mnêmeion' or, in the Vulgate, 'monumentum' occurs for the last time in 20:11. The tomb progressively recedes into the background and Jesus comes to the fore, as typical for the dual compositions of the Noli me tangere. This rupture in localization is emphasized by another feature that is marked in the text as well as in the image. It has to do with the bodily dynamics of Mary. Verse 14 says that Mary Magdalene turns her back when she answers the angels just before seeing Christ for the first time. As such she doesn't recognize him yet: 'conversa est retrorsum et videt Iesum'. The Latin phrase literally means to turn around (with a dynamic sometimes to flee) in a backwards direction (which means the movement is doubly stressed). In verse 16, Mary Magdalene turns a second time. This is the moment when she recognizes her master: 'Rabbouni'. The turning around adds a nervous energy to the narrative and mirrors the woman's panic. Each *conversa* is connected to a specific gaze and a specific manifestation. The first is a conversion towards the gardener she sees, the second towards the master she recognizes.

²⁶ Bieringer, "'They Have Taken Away My Lord'' 10; Smit Sibinga J., "Towards Understanding the Composition of John 20", in Segbroeck F. van – Tuckett C.A.M. – Belle G. van – Verheyden J. (eds.), *The Four Gospels. Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (Louvain: 1992) 2139–2152, at 2139. On the intensity of seeing and its relationship to believing, see Phillips G.L., "Faith and Vision in the Fourth Gospel", in Cross F.L. (ed.), *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (London: 1975) 83–96, at 91–92.

²⁷ Nürnberg R., "Apostolae Apostolorum" 228–242.

In Puccio's fresco, moreover, the dorsal position of Mary Magdalene towards the sepulchre strengthens the polarity in the composition, marking the sepulchre as an element to forget, to negate, to turn one's back on, and instead announcing the next phase – that of the gaze toward and, finally, the recognition of the Resurrected. This is the third manifestation of Christ. Ulrike Tarnow interprets the double 'conversion' as a mirror of the Magdalene's inner conversions. 'Über Wiederholung […] wird die Notwendigkeit einer inneren, hier jedoch auch als konkret äusserlich zu vollziehenden Wendung vom falschen zum richtigen Objekt betont'. ²⁸ Isn't the Magdalen of the *Noli me tangere* indeed the very third *conversa*, but now the inner one? It is as a *conversa*, not towards the gardener, not towards Rabbouni, but towards the Resurrected, that she finally sees with the eyes of faith. ²⁹

Ever since the already mentioned Cluny *sermo*, the aspect of conversion is strongly rooted in the Mary Magdalene figure.³⁰ But the conversion in the *Noli me tangere* is not only conversion of penitence, but conversion of final insight.³¹ It is a conversion towards the *essential* and the unspeakable.³² *Noli me tangere* is as it were an iconic turn. In the shift from the sepulchre to the body of Christ, indeed in the 'conversa est retrorsum', a new pact is made: the pact between place and gaze. This new pact leaves the importance of the spot, the emptiness, behind in favour of a new paradigm: the untouchable yet visible body. The iconic turn glorifies sight as insight and generates a transition from the historical and objectified locus, the sepulchre, the garden – the narrative – to the

²⁸ Tarnow, "'Noli me tangere'" 213.

²⁹ The idea of the Magdalene's backwards position is explained by Mellinkoff as a sign of outcast. I don't think this idea is relevant for the *Noli me tangere*; Mellinkoff R., *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, CA: 1993), vol. I, 220–222. In a miniature of the M.R. James memorial Psalter, late fourteenth century (London, British Library, MS Add. 44949, fol. 4r) Mary Magdalene of *Noli me tangere* is turned with her back towards us. She shows her pixis towards Christ. In this position, she seems to embody the narrative of the 'conversa est retrorsum'.

³⁰ Iogna-Prat, "La Madeleine" 37-79.

³¹ The tears of Mary Magdalene become the liquid symbol of her penitence. Geoffrey of Vendôme (d. 1132) states in his sermon: 'We do not read that she spoke, but that she wept. Despite this, we believe that she was eloquent, but with tears and not with words'. The moisture that wells up in the eyes brings forth the torrent of confession. See Nagy P., Le don des larmes aux moyen âge (Paris: 2000) 388–412.

³² The Canticle of Mary Magdalene is a monologue written in the thirteenth century in Provence: Brunklaus F.A., *Het Hooglied van Maria Magdalena* (Maastricht: 1940) 89; and it says about *Noli me tangere*: 'My body glowed from a glorious fire, trembling with sensuality I have never known like this. And all the goodness of which I longed to be capable, filled me, as with a new soul. And my whole dark past flowed out of me in tears'.

Noli me tangere as a locus beyond – the iconic. On the level of visuality, we touch upon the deepest epistemology of *Noli me tangere*: the threshold between presence and absence, or between bodily seeing and spiritual seeing.

These transitions from corporeal sight to spiritual vision are important dynamics in the medieval and early modern exegesis of sight and insight as early as the Venerable Bede (673–735). In his *Homily* 11.15, he says: 'For indeed all those who believe, whether they be those who saw him in the flesh, or those who believe after his Ascension, share in the most benevolent promise, as Matthew writes: "Blessed are the pure of heart for they will see God"'. *Matthew* 5:8 is indeed a central phrase in these reflections on spiritual seeing.³³

The scene from Puccio di Simone prefigures a vast iconographic tradition in Italy. Fra Angelico had not been able to paint his famous version without Puccio [Fig. 3].³⁴ This typology of Mary Magdalene as a hermit and an emblem of poverty is influenced by contemporary sources describing her as a bride, on the one hand, and a penitent, on the other.³⁵ The *Meditationes vitae Christi* narrated as follows: 'And they stayed together lovingly with great joy [...], she looked at him closely. [...]. I can hardly believe that she did not touch him familiarly, but he acted thus [...] as I said, because he wished to elevate her soul to things of heaven (and not of earth)'.³⁶ The *Legenda aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine (ca. 1260) typecast Mary Magdalene as the hermit in Sainte-Baume: this model influenced the female hermit type of the Magdalen in the *Noli me tangere* as well as the cave-like sepulchre in the background.³⁷ This new role has to be

³³ *Homilia* 11.15. Deshman R., "Another Look at the Disappearing Christ. Corporeal and Spiritual Vision in Early Medieval Images", *The Art Bulletin* 79 (1997) 518–546, here 536.

³⁴ Didi-Huberman G., Fra Angelico, Dissemblance and Figuration (Chicago: 1995) 14.

³⁵ Renna T., "Mary Magdalen in the Thirteenth Century", Michigan Academician. Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters 30 (1995) 59–68; Jansen K.L., The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages (Princeton: 1999).

³⁶ Ragusa I., Meditations on the Life of Christ (Princeton, NJ: 1961) 362-363.

³⁷ Along with the spread of the Vézelay cult from the eleventh century onwards, the *Vita eremetica* is expanded into a *Vita apostolica*, which tells us how Mary Magdalene went ashore in Marseille, converted the people of the Provence and withdrew to the wilderness of Sainte-Baume where she lived as a hermit, died, and was buried in Saint-Maximin, where her head relic is still kept. See Lobrichon G., "Le dossier magdalénien aux XI°–XII° siècles", *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. Moyen Âge* 104 (1992) 163–180, edition of this *Vita* at 164–169. The *Vita apostolica* was distributed in the *Legenda Aurea* by Jacob de Voragine, 1260. See Voragine Jacobus de, *The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, ed. W.G. Ryan, 2 vols. (Princeton: 1995), vol. I, 375.



Fig. 3. Fra Angelico, Noli me tangere (ca. 1445). Fresco, 177 \times 139 cm. Florence, San Marco, cell 1. Image © San Marco.

understood in the context of the intensification of confession in everyday life as a personal path to salvation and perfection. Petrarch (1304–1373) says of her: 'Dulcis amica dei / lacrymis inflectere nostris' ('sweet friend of God, beware of our tears'), in a poem that he actually wrote in the cave

of Sainte-Baume.³⁸ Petrarch considered Mary Magdalene not only as an intercessor and *mediatrix*, but also as the incorporation of the closest and most intimate contact with God possible.

The aforementioned Italian literary context of Puccio's painting refers to a tendency from the fourteenth century onwards to generate in the beholders' mind what one might call 'scopic empathy'. As beholders of the *Noli me tangere* scene, we look through the eyes of Mary Magdalene, reaching insight in the bodily concepts of one man, and his departure to the Father. *Noli me tangere* enables that transformation by making its pact also between space and *our own* gaze. We too must go beyond corporeal sight, as Mary Magdalene first perceived Christ with physical eyes – the body of Rabbouni – and only then with the eyes of faith – the resurrected body.

From this ultimate scopic point of view, the inch of space between a thumb and a finger is *pars pro toto* for a big transition in the history of salvation: the transition from Christ's physical visibility to his invisibility. The deictic void between the hands so small that it is almost unbearable, is the door ajar, the nearest one can get to see God, to grasp and understand the Divine completely. The visual medium, in which the prohibition of touch necessarily has to be made visible in the gesture of an almost-touch, elliptically recuperates the motif of touch. The suggestion of an interrupted touch is so intense in early modern iconography that the deictic void manifests itself as (the medium of) a touch itself.³⁹ It is almost impossible to forget about touch. But the latter remains impossible in this life – there will always be a *Noli me tangere* zone as there always will be a veil. The 'face to face' can only be reached in death: after passing the dark woods, and going hereafter into the light of the face of God himself: the *visio heata*.

The beatific vision, apex and goal, was from 1331 onwards discussed in terms of whether this would be enjoyed by the souls after their individual death or only after the Last Judgment and the resurrection of the body. According to a sermon by Pope John XXII, only the latter could be the

³⁸ Duperray E., "Le Carmen de Beata Maria Magdalena. Marie-Madeleine dans l'oeuvre de François Pétrarque: Image emblématique de la Belle Laure", in Duperray E. (ed.), *Marie Madeleine dans la mystique, les arts et les lettres* (Beauchesne: 1989) 273–288.

³⁹ Luce Irigaray provides a beautiful image of this: 'The joined hands, not those that take hold one of the other, grasp each other, but the hands that touch without taking hold – like the lips'; Irigaray L., *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (New York: 2004) 142. Irigaray goes so far as to say that sight is even impossible without a sense of touch; touch furnishes knowledge.

case. This text had an enormous impact.⁴⁰ *Noli me tangere*, interpreted as a resurrected body – Christ's body – on its way back to God, is in its essence a figure of the longing for the *visio beata*, of the expectation of this ultimate joy. On this stage, the *Noli me tangere* of Puccio di Simone is performatively speaking wonderfully fitting, not only in the funerary context of the Strozzi chapel, but also in light of the theme of St. Lucia. Is it not remarkable indeed, that the painting is connected to the great patron of sight and light? Light, which becomes important in combination with sight, is considered in Western thought as the invisible medium that makes knowledge of the world possible because it makes the world visible.⁴¹

3. The 'Sonoric' Moment: First Hearing, Then Seeing

So far the *Noli me tangere* has brought out a process of transformation that diverts the prohibition on touch into a gaze (the 'iconic turn'), both in the parent text and in the iconography. The gaze leads to an interiorized insight (*horaô*), a comprehensive and understanding seeing that is independent of understanding by touch (although in the arts this touch remains an implicit presence; seeing includes touching). *Noli me tangere* therefore seems to defend a model of knowledge against haptocentrism. This hegemony is characteristic of Western European modernity. According to Jay, 'it must [...] be acknowledged that Hellenic thought did on the whole privilege the visual over any other sense'.⁴² Contemporary philosophy, especially the French school, contests the primacy of sight and has reinstated the importance of touch.⁴³ Luce Irigaray characterizes scopophilia as typically masculine and diametrically opposite to touch as feminine.⁴⁴ This division is also expressed in the *Noli me tangere* itself. But

⁴⁰ Trottmann C., La vision béatifique: Des disputes scolastiques à sa définition par Benoît XII, Bibliothèque des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 289 (Rome: 1995).

⁴¹ Jay M., Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought (Berkeley: 1993) 30.

⁴² Jay, Downcast Eves 28.

⁴³ For these anti-ocular thoughts see Derrida J., "Le toucher, Touch/To Touch Him", *Paragraph* 16 (1993) 122–157.

⁴⁴ Vasseleu C.A., *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau Ponty*, Warwick Studies in European Philosophy (London – New York: 1998) 7. Vision, according to Irigaray, is priviliged by men. Vision objectifies, creates distance and dominates, placing women in a passive position. Women thereby become the object of contemplation. In Irigaray's opinion, however, women prefer touch to vision. Touch is thus related to women, giving rise to a feminisation thereof.

the phallocentric modernist model that the *Noli me tangere* might at first sight embody will be nuanced in what follows. To begin with, the prohibition of touch is sandwiched between two other senses: hearing and sight. I would like to develop this further on the basis of Girolamo Savoldo's Mary Magdalene (ca. 1524) in the National Gallery in London [Fig. 4].⁴⁵

Mary Magdalene looks out of the painting, at us. The composition refers in an ambiguous way to two new genres in the Mary Magdalene iconography of the sixteenth century: the genre of the Magdalene portrait on the one hand, and the half-sized penitent, often weeping or praying Mary Magdalene in the grotto, on the other.⁴⁶ Still, this Mary Magdalene refers to the *Noli me tangere* tradition. Striking in the painting by Savoldo is the ambivalent reaching out/not yet reaching out of the hands. The meaningful *deixis* of the *Noli* is inexistent as yet, considering the veiled right hand. The veiling of hand and body in this painting is no innocent motif, but is essentially directed at the particular moment in verse 16. Unveiled, the Master is indeed recognized, but still veiled is the Resurrected whom she will see about one verse further, beyond the frame of this painting. When Savoldo touched Mary Magdalene with his paintbrush and thus brought her to life visually, yes called her by her name, he was the first person she saw: her artistic Rabbouni, master, and creator. This Noli me tangere is about the relationship between model and artist. Consequently, it is also about the genesis of the image. But different to the awakening of the girl who was later given the name of Galatea in the Ovidian myth of Pygmalion, who sees and is touched by her creator, the sculptor, this Noli me tangere is about painting. In painting, the relationship between image and viewer is not a tactile one. It functions in the energetic field of the gaze. Or to say it differently: the impossibility for Mary Magdalene to touch a body in transformation shifts towards the impossibility for the beholder to touch the painting. In the Renaissance mind of Savoldo, Noli me tangere touches on the mystery of visuality itself.

But there is more. Mary Magdalene's posture betrays that she has turned about.⁴⁷ As we know, this turn of the *conversa*, is described in the

⁴⁵ Pardo M., "The Subject of Savoldo's Magdalene", *The Art Bulletin* 71 (1989) 67–91.

⁴⁶ Giraud Y., *L'image de la Madeleine du XVe au XIXe siècle* (Freiburg: 1996); Mosco, *La Maddalena*; Branden J.P. vanden, "'La Mélancholie' ou 'Marie-Madeleine pénitente'", *Bulletin van de Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België* 38–40 (1989–1991) 283–294; Baert B., *Mary Magdalen* (Ghent: 2002).

⁴⁷ See on the pictorial concept of the *bustum* as *Unheimlichkeit* due to the combination of the static and dynamic pose Kohl J. – Müller R. (eds.), *Kopf/Bild: Die Büste in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Munich – Berlin: 2007) 9–30.



Fig. 4. Girolamo Savoldo, *Noli me tangere* (ca. 1524). Oil on canvas, 89.1×82.4 cm. London, National Gallery. Image © National Gallery.

Gospel at the moment when she is addressed as 'Mary!' Savoldo paints the look of recognition in verse 16: 'Rabbouni!' just before the *Noli me tangere* will be uttered. He calls, she turns. The speech echoes still in the gaze of this painting. What Savoldo has understood is that *Noli me tangere* is also an iconography of direct speech, of calling and exclamation: 'Mary!'; 'Rabbouni!' The first call ('Mary!') is epistemologically interesting, since it is the voice that leads to recognizing the master. 'Human persons find it difficult to close themselves off from sound. [...] Hearing leaves the impression that it takes place within the person. In order to discover the

origins of a sound we must first confirm it using another sense, namely the sense of touch or sight. [...] The sound is alienated from its origins'.⁴⁸ In fact, the learning by voice refers to an archetype in pedagogy: 'acousmatic' listening.⁴⁹ Pythagoras, for instance, delivered his lectures from behind a black curtain to prevent his physical presence from hindering his audience's concentration. The invisibility of master and pupil, for example by dividing the room with a curtain or veil, was held to increase mental concentration.

Hearing is an extremely primitive sense: it is the first and the last sense, and in principle precedes speech.⁵⁰ Hearing is the sense that the foetus already possesses in the womb: the foetus hears the mother's voice. It is also said to be the last sense that is lost in the process of dving and the only sense to remain latent in the comatose. Speech and hearing work together in a knowledge-generating system that certainly precedes the visual-literary epistemology of Plato (429-347 BC). 'Da der Hörsinn rückbezüglich ist, hört sich der Sprechende selbst. Sein Hören folgt seinem Sprechen; es ermöglicht ihm, sich als Sprechendem zu folgen, also nachdenklich zu sein'. 51 Communication by speaking and hearing typifies oral culture, in which acoustic mimesis – transmitting values and insights – is more important than written, and therefore visible, laws.⁵² Oral culture is a culture of 'intercession', in which prophets play an important part. In such cultures, therefore, the tension between speaking and keeping silent is dual and fundamental: it is a tension that is ruled by the bounds of taboo or the deepest possible mystery.⁵³ In this sense, we might compare the 'auditive' aspect of Noli me tangere also with the aural fascination in the Annunciation: the spoken word 'Ave Maria' enters the ear of Mary

 $^{^{48}}$ Wyschogrod E., "Doing before Hearing: On the Primacy of Touch", in Laruelle F. (ed.), *Textes pour Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris: 1980) 179–203, at 193; Demasure, "Noli me tangere" 313.

⁴⁹ Chion M., *Audio-Vision. Sound on Screen* (New York: 1994). With my gratitude to Wim Lambrechts.

 $^{^{50}}$ Wulf C., "Das mimetische Ohr", Paragrana. Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie 2 (1993) 9–15.

⁵¹ Wulf C., "Das mimetische Ohr" 9–10.

 $^{^{52}\,}$ It is, furthermore, an epistemology that is rooted in magic, such as the 'pronouncing' of spells to control nature. Wulf C., "Das mimetische Ohr" 12: 'Die Mimesis der Natur vollzieht sich über das "Hören" der menschlichen Stimme durch das "Ohr" der Natur'.

⁵³ Hahn A., "Reden und Schweigen", *Paragrana. Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie* 8 (1999) 204–231.

and induces conception. 54 The secret of the incarnation is hidden in the spoken and aurally received word (*conceptio per aurem*). 55

As soon as Mary recognizes her master ('Rabbouni!'), she reaches out to *touch*. The *Noli me tangere* paradigm – in other words – would suggest indeed a chronology of the senses: hearing, (not) touching and finally seeing in the apex of insight.⁵⁶ The iconography of *Noli me tangere* is scopophiliac in nature, but a phonocentric aspect resonates behind it: the archetypical function of hearing in prophetic knowledge and in the secret of incarnation. The Mary Magdalene of Savoldo is besides its iconic turn a *sonoric* image indeed. And couldn't we interpret the same subtle interplay of the sense of hearing in the Ottonian miniature, the Codex Egberti [Fig. 1]? The miniaturist painted the hand of Christ touching the epigraphy MARY above her head. Christ, the *vox*, who is calling Mary, 'touches' her in her very name. Thus the miniaturist expresses touch as speech and enriches the image with its *sonoric* potential.

4. The Gaze in the Garden

The setting of the *Noli me tangere* is the garden. The visual medium interacts with this topography in many ways. At this point it is interesting to note the importance of the tree in *Noli me tangere* [Fig. 5]. Besides its narrative index (tree = garden), the tree separates the figures and therefore often has a compositional function. On the level of content, the tree indicates the separate worlds of Mary Magdalene and of Christ, and materializes the impossibility of union between these two worlds. The semantic function of the tree is to represent the undepictable: the borderline, the

⁵⁴ Steinberg L., "'How shall this be'? Reflections on Filippo Lippi's Annunciation", *Artibus and Historiae* 8 (1987) 25–44.

⁵⁵ Kaempfer W., "Die Zeit der Malerei und der Raum der Musik: Zur Frage des Funktionentauschs von Auge und Ohr", *Paragrana. Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie* 2 (1993) 40–44.

⁵⁶ The difference between recognition through the voice and recognition by sight, in parallel with insight through intangibility and insight through tangibility, is nowadays also seen as a hermeneutic key to the (apparent) opposition between *Noli me tangere* and the story of Thomas (*John* 20:24–31). This is used by Nancy, *Noli me tangere* 50 and Alphant M. – Lafon G. – Arasse D., *L'excès des images* 79–126, 97. This interpretation has valuable implications for the history of the appreciation of the auditory and visual senses in religious faith.



Fig. 5. Martin Schongauer, *Noli me tangere* (1475–1480). Burin engraving, 16×16.1 cm. Paris, Musée du Petit Palais (inv. dutuit 8632). Image © Musée du Petit Palais.

in-between, the impossibility of touch.⁵⁷ In that sense the tree also materializes the prohibition itself. On a symbolic level the tree evokes paradise,

⁵⁷ See for more on this Baert B., "Noli me tangere: The Narrative and Iconic Space", in Cioba M. et al. (eds.), Espaces et mondes au Moyen Âge. Actes du colloque international tenu à Bucarest les 17–28 octobre 2008 (Bucarest: 2009) 279–300; Baert B., "In Touch with Jerusalem: Noli me tangere and Narrative Space", in Wolf G. – Hoffmann A. (eds.), Jerusalem Erzählraum (Florence: forthcoming); Baert B., "The Pact between Space and Gaze: The Narrative and the Iconic in Noli me tangere", in Dekoninck R. – Guiderdoni A. (eds.), To Tell, to Think and to Experience Images from Theology to Rhetoric and Aesthetics in the Early Modern Period, Art and Religion (Louvain: forthcoming); Baert B. – Kusters L., "The Tree as Narrative, Formal, and Allegorical Index in Noli me tangere", in Worm A. (ed.), The Tree: Symbol, Allegory, and Structural Device in Medieval Thought and Art (Turnhout: forthcoming).

referring both to the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge.⁵⁸ Similarly, Christ's cross was already considered a reference to both trees in patristic literature.⁵⁹ In the representation of Mary Magdalene, the tree clarifies the typological connection with Eve. Petrus Chrysologus (d. ca. 450) formulated the connection between the tree and the Holy Sepulchre: the Tree of Knowledge aroused Eve's desire, the tomb of Christ that of the Maries (*Sermo* 74:3, and *Sermo* 77:4.7). In the final analysis, the tree expresses the idea of emotional and anthropological regression: towards paradise lost, towards the first woman and original sin. The rural setting evokes Christ as the *Adam novus*, and consequently Mary Magdalene as the *Eva nova*.

In some cases, as for example in Martin Schongauer's (1435?–1491) famous *Noli me tangere*, the garden is extremely elaborate [Fig. 6]. There is bucolic excess in this enclosed garden overflowing with floral abundance and the ripest fruit. We notice that a major characteristic of the *Noli me tangere* theme in the North is precisely the representation of the enclosed garden, often with Christ as the Gardener: the *Christus hortolanus*. We do not mean Christ merely wearing a tunic and carrying a spade or a rake, but Christ depicted in the full garb of a gardener, as on the pall of ca. 1525 in the Museum Mayer van den Bergh in Antwerp [Fig. 7].⁶⁰ According

⁵⁸ Ezekiel describes the Tree of Life as a cosmic tree laden with countless fruit in the navel (*omphalos/nucleus*) of the world (31:3–10). As axis of the world, or *axis mundi*, the tree supports time and space, and is transferred by the early fathers of the church to Christ, the Messiah; Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215) says that the Tree of Life is *logos*: the word become flesh: *Stromata* V, II, 72, 2. See Reno S.J., *The Sacred Tree as an Early Christian Literary Symbol: A Phenomenological Study*, Forschungen zur Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte 4 (Saarbrücken: 1978) 106.

⁵⁹ Tertullian (ca. 160–ca. 240) formulates the opposition between the two trees in his Adversus Iudaeos as an idea fundamental to salvation. He finds that what we have lost through Adam is regained through the wood of the cross of Christ; Reno, The Sacred Tree 165. The lignum of the cross must 'rewrite' the lignum of Genesis. See also Armstrong G.T., "The Cross in the Old Testament: According to Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem and the Cappodocian Fathers", in Klein G. (ed.), Theologia Crucis – Signum Crucis. Festschrift für Erich Dinklers zum 70. Geburtstag (Tübingen: 1978) 17–38, 17; Höhler G., Die Bäume des Lebens: Baumsymbole in den Kulturen der Menschheit (Stuttgart: 1985) 115; Leathers M. – Grimley K.P., "The Symbol of the Tree Interpreted in the Context of Other Symbols of Hierarchical Order, the Great Chain of Being and Jacob's Ladder", in Leathers M. – Grimley Kuntz P. (eds.), Jacob's Ladder and the Tree of Life: Concepts of Hierarchy and the Great Chain of Being (New York – Paris: 1987) 319–334.

⁶⁰ Baert B., cat. entry in Baert – Bieringer – Demasure – Eynde (eds.), *Noli me tangere* 60–61; Nieuwdorp H.M.J. – Sorber F., cat. entry in *Weefsels-Borduurwerk-Kant-Wandtapijten. Catalogus 3 Museum Mayer van den Bergh* (Antwerp: 1980) 73, nr. 159. Legends: O/SPES/.A/VIA/..PSOR/LAPSA/MA/; O/PIA/PECCAT(RI)X/SPO(N)SI/CELESTRIS/REX/; IMPETRET/AD/DNM/TUA/SCAPCA/SU./; SUPPLICIO./FAV./ELCE/GAUDIA/PIIS.



Fig. 6. Martin Schongauer, *Noli me tangere* (ca. 1481). Retable, tempera on panel. Detail from the altarpiece of the Dominicans, 115 \times 115 cm. Colmar, Musée d'Unterlinden. Image © Musée d'Unterlinden.

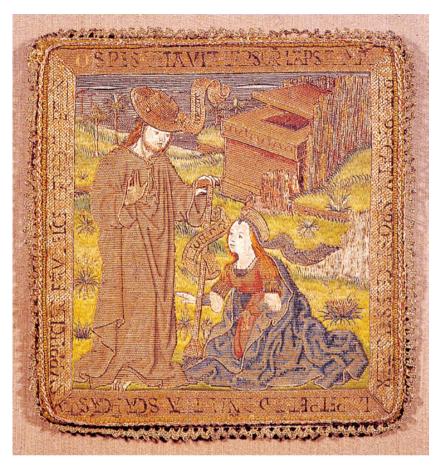


Fig. 7. Anon., *Noli me tangere* (ca. 1525). Pall, 17 × 16 cm. Antwerp, Museum Mayer van den Bergh. Image © Museum Mayer van den Bergh.

to certain authors, the contraction of these successive moments into one scene is the result of an influence from drama.⁶¹ The introduction of the *Christus hortolanus* took place in the Passion plays, in which Christ's 'disguise' was an important theatrical element.⁶² Thus Christ wears the costume of the *hortolanus* in the *Noli me tangere* scene of the so-called

⁶¹ Collins F., The Production of Medieval Church Music-Drama (Charlottesville, VA: 1972) 63.
62 This standpoint is defended by Rafanelli, The Ambiguity of Touch 161. It concerns an elaboration of the liturgical drama Visitatio sepulchri. See Young, The Drama; Chauvin M., The Role of Mary Magdalene in Medieval Drama, PhD dissertation (Catholic University of America: 1951) 142; Garth H.M., Saint Mary Magdalene in Mediaeval Literature (Baltimore:

Visitatio sepulchri. And the logic of presenting Jesus as gardener might also be that of presenting Mary Magdalene's perspective.

But there is more. The garden further suggests a powerful intertextual connection with the Song of Songs, namely with the bride's search for her bridegroom in the garden. The relationship between *John* 20 and the *Song of Songs* (particularly 3:1–4) was already recognised by Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235).⁶³ When the watchmen show the bride the way, she wants to take the beloved to her mother's room for an intimate encounter. Where the seeking and finding in *John* 20 culminates in the emotion of letting go, 'the Song of Songs colours in the relationship between woman and man as a seeking and finding, as a grasp in order to hold'.⁶⁴ In the Roman ritual this passage became the reading for the Feast of Mary Magdalene on 22 July. This intertextual link with the Song of Solomon was spread by some Apocrypha and by the *Biblia Pauperum*.

The apocryphal *Canticle of Mary Magdalene*, written in thirteenth-century Provence, expresses the Magdalene's great love for Christ in a monologue. "Mary!", he said. And I recognised the Master and rushed to him, to embrace him. But he said: "Do not touch me!". And I understood that I must die, like him, if I was to be at one with love, that does not die, but, beyond death and the grave, points us the way to a happiness that is great without end and durable without end'. Here, the insight-generating impact of the *Noli me tangere* is radicalised to such an extent that Mary Magdalene has to pass through death, together with Christ, so that she can be 'resurrected' in everlasting love and wisdom. His *Noli me tangere* scene is mirrored in the Christian cosmology itself.

In the Paupers' Bible, the *Biblia Pauperum*, the *Noli me tangere* is connected, on the one hand, to Daniel in the lions' den (*Dan.* 6:19–24) and, on

^{1950) 69.} There is reference to dialogues in the medieval plays in which Christ tests Mary Magdalene's faith by appearing to her 'in disguise'.

⁶³ In canticum canticorum, 25; Garitte, Traités d'Hippolyte 45–49. See also Saxer, "Marie Madeleine" 219–239.

⁶⁴ Eynde I. van den, "Do Not Hold on to Me: A Plea for an Intertextual Interpretation of Mary Magdalene", in Baert – Bieringer – Demasure – Eynde (eds.), *Noli me tangere* 1–14, at 11.

⁶⁵ Brunklaus, *Het Hooglied* 96. The *Noli me tangere* is also associated with the Raising of Lazarus: 'And I, filled with gratitude, embraced the master, but with one look from his eyes, he warded me off. "Do not touch me", he said. But already Lazarus lay in my arms, weeping for joy'. Brunklaus, *Het Hooglied* 92.

⁶⁶ According to Derrida, such a radical impact can only come from the sense of touch, never from the other senses, such as the gaze. Only touch can be such that the lack of it (with babies who are not held, for instance) or an excess (violence) can lead to death. Derrida, "Le toucher" 61–62.

the other, to the encounter and embrace of the bride and bridegroom in the hortus conclusus (Song of Songs 3:4) [Fig. 8].⁶⁷ The Enclosed Garden is more than a topos, it is a spiritual metaphor referring to horticulture as an allegory of mystical love.⁶⁸ The bridegroom invites the bride in with the words: Veni in hortum meum, soror mea, sponsa, messui murram meam cum aromatibus meis' (Song of Songs 5:1: 'Come into my garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my myrrh with my spices'). And 'your breasts are sweeter than wine' (*Song of Songs* 1:1). The first Church Fathers already interpret the Bible's erotic text as an allegory of mystical love that appeals to the whole sensorium. Time and time again scholars would try to elaborate on the praise of the uniting of bride and bridegroom. For Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) the opening kiss of the Song of Songs - 'Osculetur me' ('Let him kiss me') - is the mystical kiss and an image of Christ's incarnation. 'Let us then / Perhaps dare / To raise our head / To the kiss of glory / I speak shuddering and trembling / Not only to see / But to be kissed', he writes in his Sermones super cantica canticorum. 69 The religious woman recognizes these considerations in her own spirituality and 'translates' the Song of Songs into an interiorized garden, pars pro toto for her own spirituality and *locus* of her love of God.

The amorous interpretation of Mary Magdalene as bride and as (penitent) lover was particularly strong north of the Alps due to the influence of courtly love and mysticism. In many texts from the Low Countries allusions occur to the *minne* of the *mulieres religiosae*. The *Conversio beatae Mariae Magdalenae* published by Hansel, which was distributed in Middle Dutch and in Low German from the thirteenth century onwards, is characteristic of her perception at that time. Mary Magdalene is presented as a *mondaine*, a beautiful woman, who often goes to parties. When Martha

⁶⁷ In this prefigurative context it is also worth mentioning that Mary Magdalene is given the epithet of *Fons vitae* already in tenth-century hymns. Mary Magdalene, the weeping, incorporates liquefaction, the lacrymose female sex. She is fluid, the water source of paradise. See Nagy, *Le Don des Larmes* 388–412.

⁶⁸ Asiedu F.B.A., "The Song of Songs and the Ascent of the Soul: Ambrose, Augustine, and the Language of Mysticism", *Vigiliae Christianae* 55 (2001) 299–317.

⁶⁹ 'Tunc demum / Audemus forsitan / Ad ipsum attollere / Pavens et tremens dico / Non solum speculandum / Sed etiam osculandum' (*Sermones super cantica canticorum* II, 3, *Patrologia latina*: http://www.binetti.ru/bernardus/86 i.shtml).

⁷⁰ See Baert B., "The Gaze in the Garden. Noli me tangere and Embodiment in the Fifteenth-Century Netherlands and Rhineland", *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 58 (2008) 37–61.

⁷¹ Hansel H., *Die Maria-Magdalena-Legende: Eine Quellen-Untersuchung* 1 (Greifswald: 1937): see for the following esp. vs. 116–118; and Baert B., "The Gaze in the Garden: Mary Magdalene in Noli me tangere", in Erhardt M.A. – Morris A.M. (eds.), *Mary Magdalene:*

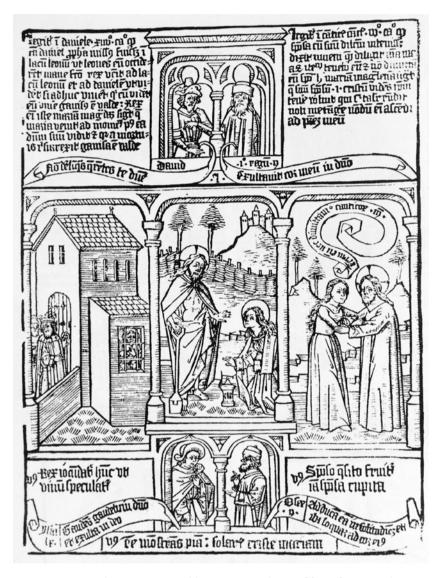


Fig. 8. Anon., *Noli me tangere, Biblia Pauperum* (Paris, fifteenth century). Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. Image © Bibliothèque Nationale.

has once again been an exemplary housekeeper, she starts telling her sister about Jesus, 'cuius pulchritudinem omnis rationalis creatura miratur' ('whose beauty every rational creature admires'). On hearing the story, Mary Magdalene feels touched by the hand of God, and hot tears swell in her breast. She confesses that she is a prostitute and she also calls herself a 'leprosa'. The next day, she sees Christ in the flesh, and meets his gaze. It is a gaze that wounds her – a clear reference to the *Song of Songs* 4:9.

This leads me to ponder the extent to which the *Noli me tangere*, and especially its iconographic features in the North, where the horticultural environment became so emphatic, thematizes besides the senses of touch, sight, and hearing also smell and taste [Fig. 9]. I will explore this hypothesis from two directions. First, I will investigate whether there actually was any Christian tradition that ascribed symbolic and spiritual importance to the two lowest senses, and in what contexts this usage might have flourished. Second, I will see whether any literary and iconographic idiom from the late Middle Ages and the early modern period ties scent and savour to the *hortus conclusus* and the gardening metaphor that is so clearly part of the Northern *Noli me tangere*.

In the Greek-Western hierarchy of the senses smell and taste occupy the fourth and fifth place, respectively. However, Jewish-Christian thought shows a particular fascination for the lower senses, where nostalgic regression and an intuitive form of epistèmè are involved. Let me begin with two medieval sources. The twelfth-century Liber Floridus of Lambert of Saint-Omer is relevant for its references to smell and taste, and the poetry of the thirteenth-century beguine Hadewych for taste and food. In its prologue, the Liber Floridus uses smell and taste as metaphors of knowledge.⁷² The author wants to offer his reader the honey that the bees find in the different flowers and trees of the garden. He also derives the etymology of sapere from sapor, thereby including the notions of taste and smell in his understanding of wisdom, sapientia. The idea of the bees and the garden is of course topical; it refers to paradise. But this reference to the locus amoenus also defines smell and taste as primordial senses of a lost world. We can see how Lambert is specifically interested in the prototype of scent as a 'knowledge-generating sense'. Therefore he refers to the legend of the wood of the Cross, where Seth returns to paradise

Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque, Studies in Religion and the Arts (Leiden: forthcoming).

⁷² Coene K. de, *Navelnacht: Regeneratie en kosmologie in de middeleeuwen*, PhD dissertation (Catholic University of Leuven: 2006) 68.



Fig. 9. Anon., *Noli me tangere* (1460). Woodcut. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek (VI Aa 15). Image © Staatsbibliothek.

to retrieve healing oil from the Tree of Life while Adam is dying. Instead the angel Michael gives him a branch of the Tree of Knowledge. Seth lets Adam smell that branch, which gives him the necessary joy to fall into a deep sleep of death. In the Gnostic sources of this motif, the smell does even more: it offers him universal knowledge, the *gnosis* Adam desired and transmitted to Seth. Seth would lay down the *gnosis* on two columns, one of stone that endures water, and one of clay that endures fire. I cannot develop this branch of Jewish-Christian legend any further here,⁷³ but it does show us traces of a belief in the exceptional capacity of smell to give access to a knowledge reserved to God. So it seems as though scent can procure the same result as that provided by touching the Tree of Good and Evil – ultimate knowledge, *gnosis*. The prohibition of touch is here not diverted into the gaze, but into the smell that achieves an opening to

⁷³ For a further exposé: Baert B., "The Figure of Seth in the Vault-Paintings in the Parish Church of Östofte: In Search for the Iconographical Tradition", Konsthistorisk tidskrift 66 (1997) 97–111; Baert B., A Heritage of Holy Wood: The Legend of the True Cross in Text and Image, Cultures, Beliefs and Traditions. Medieval and Early Modern Peoples 22 (Leiden: 2004) chapter V; Baert B., "Hierotopy, Jerusalem and the Legend of the Wood of the Cross", Archaevs. Study in the History of Religions 11–12 (2007–2008) 95–116; Baert B., "Hierotopy, Jerusalem and the Legend of the Wood of the Cross", in Lidov A. (ed.), New Jerusalems: Hierotopy and Iconography of Sacred Spaces (Moscow: 2009) 176–201.

knowledge, a knowledge regarded as nostalgic joy, as a deep yearning for what had been lost.

Smell, moreover, bridges different times and realities, even those spanning life and death. Smell is also considered an aerial element, like breath, and like the life-giving *pneuma*. Furthermore, smell treats knowledge as the awakening of our lost intuitions. The paradox of smell is that its connection with the past and memory is incomparable, but at the same time no other sense is so ephemeral. In Christian paradigms taste is also considered a transcendental conduit of knowledge and desire: to realize this we need only think of the famous bite into the apple.⁷⁴ Taste (*gustus*, tactus with the tongue) is in fact related to tactility with the mouth; it is a primary element of the sensorium of a child, as it discovers the world by tasting and eating food. Both scent and savour here seem to intensify the impact of the knowledge-generating senses on the area of lost secrets (intuition, the archetype of the lost paradise, the unconscious, etc.), an intensification that is even translated cosmologically (initiated gnosis, meeting and uniting with God himself).75 Of course, in Christianity the mother of all tastes, the food of all foods is the host. The cult of the holy host found avid promoters among the beguines; and one of them, the thirteenth-century Flemish beguine Hadewych, commented as follows: 'I was chosen to receive revelations in order that I might taste man and God in one knowledge' ('dat ic mensche ende god in eenre const smake soude').⁷⁶ Hadewych also said: 'Ende groet exempel mach nemen af,/ Hoe enich si hare der minnen gaf. / Dat was Maria Magdalene' ('and I see a great example in the Magdalene, and in how she gave her love').77

⁷⁴ Coene, Navelnacht 74.

⁷⁵ This explains why feminists such as the psychoanalyst Bracha Lichtenberg consider smell and taste as a 'matrixial' sense. They are preverbal and even prenatal senses, related to the period in the mother's womb. Also after birth, smell and taste remain very intimate signifiers of the bond between mother and child; Lichtenberg Ettinger B., "The With-In-Visible Screen: Images of Absence in the Inner Space of Painting", in Zegher Catherine de (ed.), *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th-Century Art* (Cambridge: 1996) 101; Lichtenberg Ettinger B., *Artworking* 1985–1999 (Brussels: 2000). But precisely the same kind of fascination will lead to the revaluation of touch in the work of Luce Irigaray. According to Irigaray, the sense of touch stands for unity. The unborn child in the womb is surrounded by fluidity. Thought detached from touch (Irigaray argues) leads to the banishment of human beings from paradise (Demasure, "Noli me tangere" 327). And also Susan Sontag gives the woman smell as primary sense of love and longing.

⁷⁶ Bynum C.W., Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food for Medieval Women (Berkeley – London: 1987) 153.

⁷⁷ Willaert F., "Hadewijch en Maria Magdalena", in Cockx-Indestege E. (ed.), *Miscellanea Neerlandica II. Opstellen voor Dr. Jan Deschamps ter gelegenheid van zijn zeventigste verjaardag* (Louvain: 1987) 57–69.

It was understandable that Mary Magdalene became a role model for the beguines. She was a perfect personification of worldly life turning to the spiritual love of God.⁷⁸

In short, in medieval encyclopaedic and mystical literature, food and smell are symbolic vehicles of knowledge and insight into the divine. Food and smell are also important metaphors of the *Lignum vitae* by Bonaventure (1221–1274), a treatise circulating in translations well into the sixteenth century, in which the reader could 'taste' the life and virtues of Christ through the fruits of the Tree of Life.⁷⁹ I can best conclude this consideration of the place of scent and taste in late-medieval mysticism with the words of Caroline Walker Bynum:

Intellect, soul, and sensory faculties were not divided, with a separate vocabulary to refer to each. Rather, God was known with senses that were a fusion of all the human being's capacities to experience. When medieval writers spoke of eating or tasting or savoring God, they meant not merely to draw an analogy to a particular bodily pleasure but, rather, to denote directly an experiencing, a feeling/knowing of God into which the entire person was caught up. [...] Thus almost all medieval mystics sometimes speak of 'tasting God', and the verb itself is a kind of bridge between the physical act of

⁷⁸ Petroff E., "A New Feminine Spirituality: The Beguines and Their Writings in Medieval Europe", in Petroff E., Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism (Oxford: 1994) 51–65. See also the article by Sarah Joan Moran in this book. For a rich study of the cultural-historical context, see also Vandenbroeck P., Hooglied: De beeldwereld van religieuze vrouwen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, vanaf de 13de eeuw (Brussels: 1994) and the literature cited there. In the Low Countries, starting from the second half of the thirteenth century, the Noli me tangere is notably present in the context of pious women, e.g. in a psalter from 1290, manufactured for the aristocratic beguine Marguerite de Prés, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 155, fol. 149 (in the illustration of Is. 12:1–6: Confitebor tibi) and the Huy Book of Hours (1300–1310), Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, MS 37, fol. 100v, for a beguine, in a miniature accompanying the psalms of penitence. Elsewhere, we devoted an article to the Magdalenadecke made in the convent of the Augustinians of Heiningen, which is kept in the church of Sankt Silvestri in Wernigerode (ca. 1240). The embroidered antependium or so-called Weisstextil was most likely made for a Magdalene altar and contains quotations both from the sermon of Gregory the Great and from the Laus tibi, Christe, a hymn by Gottschalk of Aachen (d. 1098) that was sung on 22 July. The antependium combines Noli me tangere with the episode in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and therefore shows the development from convert to apostola apostolorum. These two aspects, as well as the iconographic formulation of Mary Magdalene, characterise her reception in the North from the High Middle Ages onwards; Baert B., "The Embroidery Antependium of Wernigerode, Germany: Mary Magdalene and Female Religiosity in the 13th Century", Konsthistorisk tidskrift 76 (2007) 1-21. In this article, I defend the hypothesis that the antependium was intended for the Magdalene sisters of the nearby convent in Goslar.

⁷⁹ Bosmans E., "De Middelnederlandse vertalingen van Bonaventura's Lignum Vitae", Ons Geestelijk Erf 80 (2009) 21–47. In Tuscany we can find fourteenth-century iconographic variants on this theme, for example Taddeo Gaddi in the Santa Croce in Florence.

eating the host and the inner experience of resting in the sweetness (fruitio) of mystical union.⁸⁰

My second line of approach, the linking of smell and taste to the *hortus conclusus*, brings us to the specific literary genre of the 'garden metaphor', an influential topos at the beginning of modern times relating to the reception of, and sharing in, higher knowledge. Reindert Falkenburg has shown in his *Fruit of Devotion* that early modernity was a hinge moment in the mystical tradition of 'love in the garden':

The first tractates to employ allegorical references to the spiritual garden as a central theme date from the beginning of the thirteenth century. However, the genre only became widely popular in the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries. In this period spiritual garden allegories appear as separate texts, but also as elements within other, mainly devotional literary forms.⁸¹

These tracts were also read by the laity and were stimulated by the *Devotia moderna*. I mention *Die geestlicke boomgaert der vruchten* printed around 1500, but also Gerard Leeu's earlier *Thoofkijn van devotien*, where the soul and its spiritual relationship with God is expressed in the drinking (hence tasting) of the water of life in the garden of paradise [Fig. 10].⁸²

With regard to the material culture of this period in the Low Countries, I refer to the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century 'Enclosed Gardens' [Fig. 11].⁸³ This phenomenon of Enclosed Gardens in the North, particularly in modern-day Flanders and Mechelen (Malines), touches a deep undercurrent. Enclosed Gardens are in fact little trays or cases in which floral and vegetable motifs are mimicked by the use of beads and paper. Often these cases also included relics or little tableaux of biblical fragments. Enclosed Gardens evoke the Garden of Paradise, but more than that they evoke nostalgia and desire for the lost garden. A sort of 'remnant art', Enclosed Gardens gave material expression to the swarming, eddying, piling up of this unconscious discourse.⁸⁴ Paradise is here an image

⁸⁰ Bynum, Holy Feast 151.

⁸¹ Falkenburg R.L., *The Fruit of Devotion: Mysticism and the Imagery of Love in Flemish Paintings of the Virgin and Child.* 1450–1550, Oculi 5 (Amsterdam – Philadelphia: 1994) 20.

⁸² Antwerp, 1487; Ghent, Universitaire Bibliotheek, Res. 169, fol. 16. This is a Middle Dutch translation of Pierre d'Ailly's *Le jardin amoureux de l'âme*; Falkenburg, *The Fruit of Devotion* 36–37, figs. 47–48.

⁸³ Vandenbroeck, *Hooglied* 91–104; Baert B., "The Glorified Body: Relics, Materiality and the Internalized Image", in Vandenbroeck P. – Rooiakkers G., *Backlit Heaven* (Mechelen: 2009) 130–153.

⁸⁴ Pelzer B., "Relicten", in Vandenbroeck, *Hooglied* 179–204, at 181–182.



Fig. 10. Gerard Leeu, *The Souls in the Garden, Thoofkijn van devotien* (Antwerp, 1487). Ghent, Universitaire Bibliotheek, Res. 169, fol. 16r. Image © Universitaire Bibliotheek.



Fig. 11. Anon., *Enclosed Garden with Medallion with the Mystical Hunt for the Unicorn* (St. Augustine, the Virgin and Child with St. Anne, and St. Elizabeth, ca. 1530). Various media: wooden sculptures, textile, wax, oil on wood (medallion), $134 \times 97.5 \times 22.2$ cm. Mechelen (Malines), Gasthuiszusters. Image © Gasthuiszusters.

for knowledge that escapes the cerebral, the knowledge, partly lost, that energetically mounts up in the cosmos, but in the human descends in the form of instinct, fertility, the urge to create, in brief through the whole sensorium. Enclosed Gardens not only appeal to the gaze, but also invite smelling, touching. For this reason Enclosed Gardens might be seen as the matrixial field, the overgrowth in which feminine sensitivity is active.

Luce Irigaray links it to the haptic. 'The tangible represented a divine happiness, an "earthly paradise", until the moment it entered into the perspective of the knowledge of good and evil. Prohibition might lead to a kind of knowledge that belongs to God alone'. In Irigaray's interpretation, this is knowledge detached from touch.⁸⁵ These little paradises became very popular in the sixteenth century, and soon they would be sold on the market for a wider public with private aspirations, losing their original feminine significations and interpretations of the senses. They became part of a more general fascination for garden allegory and prayer.

By the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modernity, treatises, vernacular texts, and devotional objects teach us that the garden allegory grew from a selective female love mysticism into a more general 'spirituality of love' to be practiced in metaphors such as fragrance and savour as the privileged portals to the divine. It was again the merit of Falkenburg to show the deep Wirkungsgeschichte of garden allegory in the pictorial Marian Andachtsbilder of the Low Countries. For if texts and prayers use scents and savours as conduits of devotional experience and spiritual insight, why would looking at these motifs in the form of flowers and fruits in paintings not fulfill exactly the same spiritual function? Gerard David's (1460–1523) Virgin and Child expresses prayer by suggesting the divine scent of a rose that Mary presents to the child [Fig. 12];86 and such examples could be multiplied beyond counting. We can conclude with Falkenburg: 'In the perspective of "mirrored piety" it is possible to look to the garden tracts for greater insight into the nature of devotional attitudes associated with the consumption of fruit and flowers in the Andachtshilder', 87

I think we can apply the same notion of 'mirrored piety' to the fifteenth-century *Noli me tangere*. Mary Magdalene is the bride and therefore she is symbolically situated in the heart of all sensual senses. The treatise *Een seer schoen devoet boecxken gheheten der Minnengaert (A Beautiful, Pious Book entitled The Garden of Love)* printed in 1548 says: 'O almighty God to love whom is to eat', and further on: 'O hot burning fire, which no one may quench or put out. Will you through your immeasurable goodness make that same fire of your charity burn in my heart so that my soul will melt as the soul of Mary Magdalene did, so that I may be formed and

⁸⁵ Irigaray, An Ethics 137.

⁸⁶ Granada, Iglesia del Sacro Monte; Falkenburg, The Fruit of Devotion 85-86, fig. 31.

⁸⁷ Falkenburg, The Fruit of Devotion 83.



Fig. 12. Gerard David, *Virgin and Child* (1510–1523). Oil on panel, 43×34 cm. Granada, Iglesia del Sacro Monte. Image © Iglesia del Sacra Monte.

united in you and remain in you and you in me?'^88 Here Mary Magdalene, the notorious image of the bride, is directly linked to love mysticism in a garden allegory – the $\it Minnengaert$ in which the soul dallies with delight.

⁸⁸ Falkenburg, The Fruit of Devotion 34.

In *Noli me tangere* Mary Magdalene is also the embodiment of a process of transformation towards a higher insight into 'knowing' God. As we saw already, by the end of the Middle Ages this union was reflected in participation of the whole sensorium. On a deeper level the *Noli me tangere* also thematizes the *ostensio* of Christ as host, the host that only a priest could touch with his hands, but the faithful touched with the mouth. Precedents of this idea go back to the Schwester Katrei (1314–1324) from the circles of Master Eckhart. A beguine delivers a sermon on Mary Magdalene.⁸⁹ In the Noli me tangere, she says, Mary Magdalene is set free and becomes a proclaimer. However, active mission is not her goal, but the *unio* a woman achieves in communion. The idea of unio, communion and host, just like the Noli me tangere itself, connects sight with taste in its most intimate way. But on the other hand, Noli me tangere excludes tactility, just as women were prohibited to touch the Blessed Sacrament. It is relevant to note here that Ambrose (d. 397) had in fact interpreted the Noli me tangere as a literal prohibitio to ministrare (to serve as a priest) and extrapolated Noli me tangere to mean 'noli manum adhibere maioribus' ('do not touch the Host with the hands').90

The prohibition of Mary Magdalene's touch intensified sight but also displaced touch towards *tactus* by fragrance and taste. The paradox of *Noli me tangere* is, therefore, that the denial of touch increased the power of all the other senses. It was precisely the prohibition of touch that captured all senses in one feast of joy. Seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting God were united in one substance of insight into the mystery of the resurrected God. Thus, the Mary of *Noli me tangere* could become the Church, a Church that was fragrant with her ointment, as the Cluniac monk put it in his *In veneratione*. ⁹¹ And is not Mary Magdalene's attribute, the pot of ointment, the sensuous object of scent and salve [Fig. 13], the most powerful of all metaphors for this displacement? Is it not the primary object of every collector, a sensual fetish, *pars pro toto* for a model of knowledge that stirs the cerebral into the intuitive and vice versa?

⁸⁹ Schweitzer F.-J., Der Freiheitsbegriff der deutschen Mystik. Seine Beziehung zur Ketzerei der "Brüder und Schwestern vom Freien Geist" mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den pseudo-eckartischen Traktat "Schwester Katrei" (Frankfurt: 1981) 322–370; Borgstädt E. – McGinn B. (eds.), Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher (New York: 1986) 349–387; Newmann B., From Virile Woman to Woman Christ, Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature (Philadelphia: 1995) 172–178.

⁹⁰ Ambrose of Milan, Expositio 383–200.

⁹¹ Marrier M. – Duchêne A., Bibliotheca Cluniacensis 131–138.



Fig. 13. Ambrosius Benson, *Mary Magdalene* (sixteenth century). Oil on panel, 55.5×66.5 cm. Bruges, Groeninge Museum. Image © Groeninge Museum. Detail showing Mary Magdalene's pot of ointment.

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"THE BEADS WITH WHICH WE PRAY ARE MADE FROM IT": DEVOTIONAL AMBERS IN EARLY MODERN ITALY

Rachel King

Published in 1920, Otto Pelka wrote in the preface to his book *Bernstein* that 'European amber art had yet to be the subject of a comprehensive historical analysis'.² Some years earlier, he had begun to collate and critically establish European amber art's 'aesthetically important monuments [...] according to art historical perspectives'.³ First war, then the Russian Revolution, however, had meant that the most important collections of 'amber, as the most German of all materials for the applied arts', had been inaccessible to him.⁴ *Bernstein* was not the result that Pelka had expected. Thanks to a lack of interest in collecting historic pieces, there were few old ambers in German public collections.⁵ Most shockingly of all, the museum in Königsberg (today Kaliningrad) had few works of quality despite lying at the heart of the region in which amber both naturally occurred and was worked.⁶

Ten years later, Alfred Rohde, a curator from Königsberg, took it upon himself to create the first national collection, scouring Europe for historic amber art. In Rome he acquired magnificent sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pieces, including Costanza Gonzaga di Novellara's amber table

¹ Agricola Georgius, *De natura fossilium (Textbook of Mineralogy). Translated from the First Latin Edition of 1546 by M.C. Bandy and J.A. Bandy for the Mineralogical Society of America*, The Geological Society of America Special Paper 63 (New York: 1955) 76.

² Pelka O., *Bernstein* (Berlin: 1920) foreword: 'die europäische Bernsteinkunst [hat] bis jetzt überhaupt noch keine zusammenfassende Darstellung erfahren'.

³ Pelka O., "Die Meister der Bernsteinkunst", *Anzeiger und Mitteilungen des Germanischen National-Museums in Nürnberg* (Leipzig: 1918) foreword: 'den gesamten künstlerisch wertvollen Denkmälerbestand sammeln und nach kunstgeschichtlichen Gesichtspunkten kritisch sichern'.

⁴ Pelka, "Die Meister" foreword: 'Bernstein als deutschester aller kunstgewerblichen Robstoffe'

⁵ For a history of collections in Germany, see Hinrichs K., *Bernstein, "das Preußische Gold" in Kunst- und Naturalienkammern und Museen des 16.–20. Jahrhunderts*, Ph.D. dissertation (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: 2007).

⁶ Rohde A., "Königsberger Bernsteinarbeiten des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts", Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft 4 (1934) 205–224, here 205–206.

⁷ Rohde A., Bernstein: Ein deutscher Werkstoff. Seine künstlerische Verarbeitung vom Mittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert (Berlin: 1937) foreword.

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casket and an amber salver with the arms of Pope Clement X.8 Perhaps unsurprisingly, Rohde also became the new national authority on amber, his research culminating in 1937 with the publication of Bernstein, ein deutscher Werkstoff, a catalogue of over 300 historic objects. For reasons already evident in its title, recent scholars have damned this work as 'an embarrassing piece of scholarly history in which amber was abused 'in the ideologically-driven service of propaganda'. 9 Yet a number of the arguments made in *Bernstein* have also proven inescapable, not least because many of the documents and objects on which the book was based are now lost. One such argument was Rohde's thesis that 'the Reformation had created a formidable and unique sales crisis'. 10 According to Rohde 'those parts of the land going over to Lutheranism no longer needed rosaries while, in many cases, those areas which remained Catholic may have refused to cultivate trade relationships with those which had become Protestant, and with the arch-protestant Prussia in particular'. 11 Between 1934 and 1938, Rohde advanced this thesis three times, ¹² effectively dismissing the issue of amber in Italy for all future scholarship. 13 This contribution

⁸ Rohde, Bernstein 35, 38.

⁹ Netzer S., "Bernsteingeschenke in der preussischen Diplomatie des 17. Jahrhunderts", *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 35 (1993) 227–246, 227: 'ein beschämendes Stück Wissenschaftsgeschichte'; Effmert V., "Bernstein – teures Strandgut, luxuriöser Exportartikel: Die Wiederentdeckung eines lange vernachlässigten Materials delikater Kunstobjekte in Wissenschaft, Museen und Handel", in Laue G. (ed.), *Bernstein: Kostbarkeiten europäischer Kunstkammern* (Munich: 2006) 24–32, 24: 'im Dienst ideologischer Propaganda'.

 $^{^{10}}$ Rohde, "Königsberger Bernsteinarbeiten" 207: 'die Reformation schuf eine ungeheuere und einzigartige Absatzkrise'.

¹¹ Rohde, Bernstein 17: 'die der lutherischen Lehre zuströmenden Landesteile hatten keinen Bedarf mehr an Rosenkränzen, und die katholisch gebliebenen Länder mögen es vielfach abgelehnt haben, mit den protestantisch gewordenen Ländern, insbesondere dem erzprotestantischen Herzogtum Preußen, weiter wirtschaftliche Beziehungen zu pflegen'.

¹² Rohde A., "Bernstein, ein deutscher Werkstoff, in der Vergangenheit", in Preussische Akademie der Künste (ed.), Preußische Staatsmanufakturen: Ausstellung der Preussischen Akademie der Künste zum 175 jährigen Bestehen der Staatlichen Porzellan-Manufaktur (Berlin: 1938) 93–102, 94.

¹³ Most recently repeated in Clark N., *Amber: Tears of the Gods* (Edinburgh: 2010) 33. Amber in Italy has been the focus of Italian publications alone and primarily those of the Museo degli Argenti in Florence, most recently Mosco M., "Maria Maddalena of Austria: Amber", in Mosco M. – Casazza O. (eds.), *The Museo degli argenti: Collections and Collectors* (Florence: 2007) 96–107; Casazza O., "Le ambre di Maria Maddalena d'Austria al Museo degli Argenti", in Nava M.L. – Salerno A. (eds.), *Ambre: Trasparenze dall'antico* (Milan: 2007) 39–47. There has also been some interest in the Farnese ambers now in the Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, most recently Martino L., "Le ambre Farnese del Museo di Capodimonte", in Nava – Salerno (eds.), *Ambre* 32–38. Nonetheless, even in Italian-language scholarship there has been little interest in Italian-made ambers. An exception is Di Natale's contribution on the Sicilian amber industry: Di Natale M.C., *Materiali preziosi*

problematises his argument. Did Protestants actually cease to use amber rosaries with such immediacy? Did amber really become less available in Italy during the period Rohde called a 'crisis'? And what, if anything, was it that attracted people to amber in Counter-Reformation Italy? The investigation of these questions and the suggestion that amber's appeal to the senses, in particular to the faculties of touch and smell, contributed considerably to the popularity of objects made of this material forms the basis for a new thesis pursued in the coming pages.

Reforming the Rosary

On the eve of the Reformation, rosaries were in widespread use across Europe by men, women and children of all stations. This simple string of beads was an aid to a specific form of prayer which, if practiced diligently, was rewarded with an indulgence of 7,700 days. ¹⁴ Martin Luther disapproved of the Roman practice of indulgences and therefore also opposed devotion to the rosary. The quantitative rather than qualitative focus of rosary devotion offended the reformer who was especially disturbed by the lack of true spiritual involvement in mechanically repeating rote-learned prayers. ¹⁵

Nonetheless, rosary beads themselves continued to be an accessory to Protestant devotion. Johannes Schlagenhaufen recalled that even Luther was still using an amber rosary in 1531, a year after the Augsburg Confession, and that Luther had even volunteered to eat it if, by doing so, he would face his day of judgement sooner. Indeed long after 1525, when Albrecht of Hohenzollern, ruler of Prussia, had converted to Lutheranism and the region had been transferred out of the hands of the Teutonic Knights to become a secular duchy, amber rosaries remained the signature Prussian gift to representatives of both confessions. Albrecht sent them to

dalla terra e dal mare: nell'arte trapanese e della Sicilia occidentale tra il 18. e il 19. secolo (Palermo: 2003). See also Trusted M., A Catalogue of European Ambers in the Victoria and Albert Museum (London: 1985) 84–87 (cat. no. 22), for amber and pietre dure altarpieces in British collections.

¹⁴ Oelke H., "'Da klappern die stein . . . und das maul plappert': Der Rosenkranz im Zeitalter der Reformation", in Frei U.-B. – Bühler F. (eds.), *Der Rosenkranz: Andacht, Geschichte, Kunst* (Bern: 2003) 107–117, here 107.

¹⁵ Oelke, "Der Rosenkranz im Zeitalter der Reformation" 108–110.

¹⁶ Luther Martin, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Tischreden (1531–1546)*, ed. O. Brenner, 2 vols. (Weimar: 1913), vol. II, 23–24.

arch Roman Catholics, like Margaret of Austria, and new Lutherans, like Georg Ernst von Henneberg-Schleusingen.¹⁷

Neither amber's long association with rosary devotion nor its continued use as a material for figures of the Virgin appears to have tainted amber for Luther or Lutherans. Prussians understood amber as a sign that God favoured their homeland. He had blessed Prussia with amber and, in the works of Lutheran Prussian authors, it was the material, not the rosary beads into which it was worked that was important. Severin Göbel, a courtier in Königsberg, used anecdotes about amber's generation, collection, and properties to reveal Christian teachings. He saw a metaphor for mankind in amber and the Prussian fishermen, who collected it, were the modern equivalent of Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles:

Tossed hither and thither by those stormy waves, [amber] is knocked about for such a long time that it solidifies due to the frigidity of the sea and is altered by the sea's saltiness. The saltiness and bitterness of the sea symbolize the chains and harshness of the Law, and the image of God's anger by which, as if by storms, our first parents and their successors were oppressed for such a time, until by God's marvellous goodness they were restored to the shore and to the harbour of tranquillity again. And that restitution is made through the prophets and the apostles, who are poor fishermen, just like they who gather amber that has been cast up on the shore.¹⁹

¹⁷ Respectively Ehrenberg H., Die *Kunst am Hofe der Herzöge von Preussen* (Leipzig: 1899) 156; and Voigt J., "Fürstenleben und Fürstensitte im sechzehnten Jahrhundert", in Raumer F. von (ed.), *Historisches Taschenbuch* 6 (Leipzig: 1835) 201–371, 365.

¹⁸ See Copernicus Nicolaus, Three Copernican Treatises: The Commentariolus of Copernicus, the Letter against Werner, the Narratio prima of Rheticus, Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies 30, trans. E. Rosen (New York: 1971) 189; Göbel Severin, Historj und Eigendtlicher bericht von herkommen, ursprung vnd vielfeltigeen brauch des Bærnsteins neben andern saubern Berckhartzen (Königsberg, Hans Daubmann: 1566) unpaginated.

¹⁹ Göbel Severin, *Pia commonefactio de passione, resurrectione ac beneficiis christi, quae in historia succini depinguntur* (Oberursell, s.n.: 1558) unpaginated: '[...] in mare fluctibus fervens, quorum tempestate hinc illinc agitatus, tam diu concutitur, quoad frigiditate maris concrescat et eiusdem salsedine alteretur. Salsedo et amaritudo maris vincula et asperitatem legis ac irae Dei imaginem significat, in qua veluti procellis oppressi tantisper fuerunt primi parentes et posteri, donec admiranda Dei bonitate, iterum in littus ac portum tranquillae restituerentur, et ea restitutio fit per prophetas et apostolos, qui sunt pauperculi piscatores, sicut ii, qui succinum ad littora protrusum colligunt'. All Latin translations provided by Dr. P.O. Piper. Before the eighteenth century, amber was almost exclusively hand-fished from the sea or collected from among the seaweed on the sea shore.

Beads: Boom or Bust?

There is evidence to the effect that the production of amber beads in fact intensified rather than declined under Albrecht's administration. Albrecht instituted the systematic harvesting of amber in order to increase and stabilise vield, which depended largely on the weather conditions and could fluctuate by as much as sixty barrels (an average harvest was 110 barrels) from one year to another.²⁰ In 1533, he leased the right to trade amber to a merchant from Danzig, Paul Jaski. From this date onwards nearly all Prussian amber passed through Paul Jaski's hands and later those of his heirs.²¹ One of Jaski's clients was the Danzig guild of amber workers, formed circa 1480. Amber beads had long been the mainstay of their trade and Jaski encouraged this to continue, in part by introducing a sophisticated system of sorting amber by size and colour.²² Jaski apparently agreed to provide the Danzigers with the amber they required and at a moderate and consistent price.²³ This was important to the guildsmen who, due to high levels of waste, needed to buy 1 kg of amber for every ½ kg of beads they produced.²⁴ They soon discovered, however, that Jaski kept his price low by palming poor quality amber off on them and selling his best amber elsewhere.²⁵ By the mid-sixteenth century beads were more sophisticated than simply pierced gobbets of rough amber. They were cut and turned to be 'small and large, round, facetted, or turned like bulbs of garlic' and even incised like pinecones or cut with stump-like nodules, like those

²⁰ See the data presented by Hagen K.G., "Über den Ertrag des Bernsteins", *Beiträge zur Kunde Preussens* 6, 4 (1824) 307–317, here 309–310.

²¹ Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (henceforth GStA PK) XX HA Etatsministerium 16a 3, 16a 7, 16a 10, 16a 13, 16a 17, 16a 19. From the 1580s onwards, the rulers of Prussia made repeated, albeit unsuccessful, attempts to dispossess the Jaski family of the amber trade. When, in 1640, Elector Frederick William was once again obliged to extend their contract, he offered to buy them out for 15,000 Reichstaler. Paul Jaski's heirs demanded 50,000 but eventually settled for 40,000 paid in instalments over four years. When these payments finished in 1647, the Electors had regained power over amber for the first time in 114 years.

²² See Aurifaber Andreas, *Succini historia: Ein kurtzer gründlicher Bericht woher der Agtstein oder Börnstein ursprünglich komme* (Königsberg, Hans Lufft: 1551) unpaginated; Göbel, *Histori* unpaginated.

²³ Tesdorpf W., Gewinnung, Verarbeitung und Handel des Bernsteins in Preußen von der Ordenszeit bis zur Gegenwart (Jena: 1887) 38.

 $^{^{24}}$ Hagen K.G., "Geschichte der Verwaltung des Börnsteins in Preußen, Zweiter Abschnitt: Von Friedrich I bis zur jetzigen Zeit", Beiträge zur Kunde Preussens 6, 3 (1824) 177–199, 190.

²⁵ Tesdorpf, Gewinnung 33–34, and docs. 10a–h.

belonging to Ferdinand II, Archduke of Further Austria [Fig. 1]. 26 As Giacomo Fantuzzi learnt, when he visited Danzig in 1652, low grade amber was no good; facetted beads required flawless pieces. 27

Some Danzig masters complained; Jaski, for his part, responded by cutting off the supply to the whole guild, forcing a rift between its members and leading them to petition the town council and Duke Albrecht for help.²⁸ The guildsmen were in thrall to Jaski. He could always choose to favour others, like the recently formed guild in Elbing (Elblag).²⁹ Moreover, they needed his network of contacts if they were to be able to sell their wares abroad. By the 1540s, approximately one in every 100 merchants in the Rhine region stocked amber beads and Jaski was actively working to expand this.³⁰ In 1545 he had entered a partnership with the Antwerp merchant Hans von Achelen whose wife belonged to the Spanish Villamonte family, and he renewed the contract five years later.³¹ According to Jaski, and quite contrary to Rohde's argument, confessionalisation posed no problems to his trade with the South. Indeed, while Lutherans were disassociating themselves more and more from devotion to the rosary, Roman Catholics were increasingly embracing it, and, in part, as a marker of difference. The trade was certainly not without its difficulties, but where Jaski did experience them, he attributed them to the ongoing state of war between Charles V and France.³² Jaski was selling amber nonetheless in 'Italy, France, Spain, Turkey and the Heathen lands'.33

²⁶ See Aurifaber, Succini historia unpaginated: 'klein und gros / runt / rautticht / wie knoblochs heubter gewunden'. For Ferdinand's rosary, see Seipel W. (ed.), Bernstein für Thron und Altar: Das Gold des Meeres in fürstlichen Kunst- und Schatzkammern (Milan: 2005) 33, cat. 5a.

²⁷ Giacomo Fantuzzi's itinerary on leaving Poland in 1652, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea Armadio XV 80, fols. 25r–27v, here 27r. This is also available as Fantuzzi G., Diario del viaggio europeo (1652) con instruttione et avvertimenti per far viaggi lunghi, eds. P. Salwa – W. Tygielski (Warsaw-Rome: 1998).

²⁸ Tesdorpf, *Gewinnung* docs. 10b, 10f and 10h, petitions to the town council dated February 1538, to Duke Albrecht dated before 2 August 1552 and to the town council dated May 1553 respectively.

²⁹ Tesdorpf, Gewinnung 41–42.

³⁰ Agricola, De natura fossilium 76.

³¹ See note 21; for Lucrezia's letters following von Achelon's death, see GStA PK, XX HA Ostpreußische Folianten 12822, fols. 342r–v, 344r–v, 351r–v.

³² Tesdorpf, *Gewinnung* 122–125, doc. 10g, letter from Paul Jaski to Duke Albrecht dated 2nd August 1552. According to Tesdorpf, *Gewinnung* 15 n. 2, Charles V ennobled Jaski in 1548.

³³ Aurifaber, *Succini historia* unpaginated: 'Italiam / Frankreich / Hispanien / Tuerckeien und Heidenschafften', 'grossen gewinst'.



Fig. 1. Anon., Three Rosaries Once Belonging to Ferdinand II, Archduke of Further Austria (ca. 1540–1595). Amber, 36 cm; 18 cm; 22.5 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Sammlungen Schloss Ambras (PA 833, 835, 836). Image © Kunsthistorisches Museum.

The Market for Amber Rosaries in Italy

What do we know, then, about the contemporary market for amber in Italy? Two inventories of shops, dating to 1513 and 1547 and thus perfectly framing the period Rohde called a 'crisis', show that amber became more available in Venice in the decades after 1518, not less. Francesco Cappello's stock of amber in 1513 consisted of a single 'string of amber paternosters'. ³⁴ By 1547, the inventory of a shop belonging to his colleague Francesco da l'Anzolo included over ten references and not to single strings but rather to piles of loose beads or bags stuffed with ropes of them. ³⁵ This suggests that the Italian market for amber beads in the first half of the sixteenth century was a growing one.

³⁴ Inventory of Francesco Cappello, Archivio di Stato di Venezia (henceforth ASV) Giudici del Proprio Mobili R. 2, fol. 1: 'una corda de paternostri de ambra zalo', reproduced in Ludwig G., "Restello, Spiegel und Toilettenutensilien in Venedig zur Zeit der Renaissance", *Italienische Forschungen* 1 (1906) 181–360, 293.

³⁵ Inventory of the shop of Francesco da l'Anzolo, perfumer, ASV, Sezione notarile, miscellanea notari diversi, inventari, Busta 38, 2 April 1547, reproduced in Ludwig, "Restello" 181–360, 317–340.

It seems that when beads arrived in Italy they arrived unstrung. There was no European-wide rule about how many beads a prayer rope should have or in what combination they should be threaded; hence beads were, most often, first arranged on a string when they reached their final destination. Italian inventories most commonly refer to beads strung in combinations called cavalieri and corone on green or black, but sometimes also flesh-coloured, silk ribbons. Yet despite having different names, the corona and cavaliero appear to have been synonymous.³⁶ Although scholars usually understand the corona form to consist of six groups of ten beads, in contemporary Italian inventories and in visual representations of corone the term more often describes a single set of ten or eleven beads [Figs. 2 and 3].³⁷ This number had been consistent since the 1490s, when Italian sumptuary laws lifted their complete ban on wearing amber, allowing it to form part of a costume, but only in a restricted number of beads.³⁸ The same inventories and graphic sources show that the amber rosary commonly had a cross of amber beads or hanging ring at its head and that the beads were usually secured by a silk tassel or by an oval or octagonal amber pendant inset with a sacred scene as shown in the illustrated catalogue of Manfredo Settala's collection in Milan [Fig. 3]. Like beads, these pendants grew in popularity as the sixteenth century progressed and not all hung from rosaries. In Rome, Camillo Pamphili's amber pendant was described as a reliquary, suggesting that some heart pendants in amber may even have been home to saintly remains,³⁹ which might be why two were stored in Maria Maddalena d'Austria's Florentine Cappella delle Reli*quie* about 1616.40

³⁶ Inventory of all figures, paintings and other things in the Tribuna (1603–1631), Florence, Archivio Biblioteca Uffizi (henceforth ABU) MS 71, fol. 125r. 876: 'un cavaliere overo corona d'ambra gialla con suo anello simile e nappa di seta e oro, n. 1', reproduced in Gaeta Bertelà G., *La Tribuna di Ferdinando I de' Medici* (Florence: 1997) 63–69.

³⁷ Trusted, European Ambers 78.

³⁸ Grazia-Nico Ottaviani M. (ed.), *La legislazione suntuaria, secoli XIII–XVI: Umbria*, Pubblicazioni degli archivi di Stato: Fonti 43 (Rome: 2005) 918.

³⁹ Inventories of the Palazzo al Corso and that in Piazza Navona, Rome, Archivio Doria Pamphili, MS Scaff. 86. N. 23, fols. 100v–101r: 'un altro reliquiaretto d'ambra fatto a core col nome di Giesu da una parte e dall altra testa e busto picinino', reproduced in Garms J. (ed.), *Quellen aus dem Archiv Doria-Pamphilj zur Kunsttätigkeit im Rom unter Innocenz X.*, Publikationen des Österreichischen Kulturinstituts in Rom 4 (Rome: 1972) 364–424.

⁴⁰ Aschengreen-Piacenti K., *Il Museo degli Argenti* (Florence: 1967) 158–160, see Inv. Bargello 48 and Inv. Bargello 48 bis.



Fig. 2. Francesco Porro, 'Una decina di ambra tutta fatta a quaranta portati et il vaso tornito otangolo', illustration from the *Codice Settala* (1640/1660). Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Codici Ambrosiani Z 389 sup., fol. 29r). Image © Biblioteca Ambrosiana.

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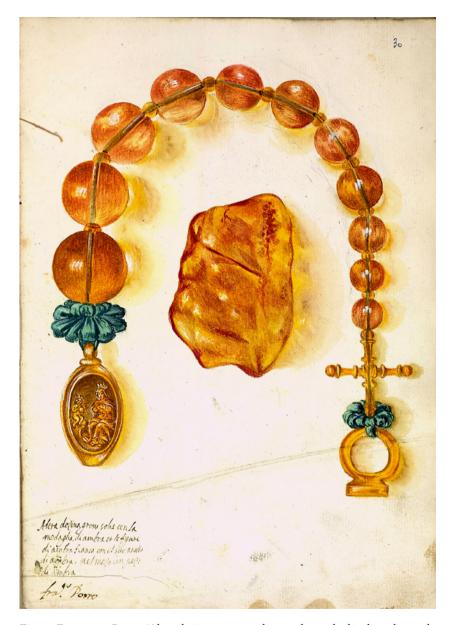


Fig. 3. Francesco Porro, 'Altra dezina grossa solia con la medaglia di ambra et le figure di ambra bianca con il suo anello di ambra. Nel mezo un pezo di ambra', illustration from the *Codice Settala* (1640/1660). Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Codici Ambrosiani Z 389 sup., fol. 30r). Image © Biblioteca Ambrosiana.

The Market for Other New Forms of Amber Objects in Italy

There was certainly a market for amber in Counter-Reformation Italy and Jaski responded to it judiciously. He exploited the aftermath of his dispute with the Danzig guildsmen, providing them with amber once again, but on the condition that all works produced with it were sold back to him.⁴¹ This effectively created a system in which guild members paid him to be his employees. It also meant that Jaski controlled what they produced and where it ended up. He also encouraged the development of new forms and it is testimony to the Italian interest in the material that these innovations were actually registered by contemporaries, albeit not always positively. Giovanni Francesco Commendone, papal legate to Prussia and Poland, saw Prussia's heresy to be particularly manifest in the new types of objects available:

La piété, qui [sur les côtes de la Prusse] est diminuée dans ces derniers siécles, en a aussi diminué le prix [de l'Ambre]. On a cessé d'en faire des figures de Jesus-Christ & des saints, que des personnes pieuses achetoient fort cher. On ne débite plus ce grand nombre de chapelets & de couronnes, dont les Dames se servoient pour les prières, & même pour leur ornement, faisant ainsi d'une même chose, une matière de luxe & de piété tout-ensemble. / Aujourd'hui, ce peuple engagé dans l'erreur, & dans les déréglemens des hérésies, ne se sert plus de cette précieuse matière, que pour des usages profanes; & l'on ne travaille plus qu'à en faire des échecs, des dames, des cuilliers, mille sortes de petis vases, & des cages même tournées tresagréablement, mais de nul usage, à cause de leur fragilité. De-là vient qu'on n'en est plus si curieux, & qu'on ne vend plus l'ambre comme auparavant. 42

Commendone clearly struggled to see the practical and instructional value of the new profane forms, and he may even have heard that Albrecht had once sought out such spoons as gifts for Luther and Philipp Melanchthon.⁴³ We can well imagine Commendone's disgust were he to have heard that the objects he so deplored were already being exported to Italy. When, in 1540, Federigo Gonzaga died, he was recorded as being the owner of a

⁴¹ Tesdorpf, Gewinnung 39.

⁴² Commendone Giovanni Francesco, *La vie du Cardinal Jean François Commendon divisée en quatre livres* (Paris, Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy: 1671) 200.

⁴³ Luther Martin, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Briefwechsel*, 18 vols. (Weimar: 1930–1985), vol. X (1947) 561–562; Hagen K.G., "Geschichte der im Jahr 1803 in Ostpreußen gefundenen großen Börnsteinmasse und Vergleichung derselben mit andern, deren in Acten und bei Schriftstellern erwähnt wird", *Beiträge zur Kunde Preussens* 6, 6 (1824) 507–523, 517.

little amber vase. 44 Ten years later, the twenty-seven-year-old Francesca Sforza not only owned a simple piece of amber and a rosary but also a pair of amber-trimmed gold handles and a piece of amber replete with a frog. 45 By the 1580s, the Medici collections in Florence also included an amber birdcage and a little model cannon. 46

Even so, beads not baubles remained the real backbone of Jaski's trade with Italy. By the late 1560s, nine different amber merchants in the German Fondaco served the Venetians, one offering as many as sixteen barrels of amber (1,440 litres).⁴⁷ And countless other merchants were importing smaller amounts to the city too.⁴⁸ Having attributed the Italian victory over the Ottoman Empire at Lepanto to the rosary, in 1571 Pius V ruled that all those who visited a church with a rosary altar on the 7th of December (the day of the festival of Thanksgiving) would receive a complete indulgence. By this date, Paul Jaski's son Israel and grandson Paul were already installed in Genoa. The family were well placed to serve the new explosion in the popularity of the rosary and the dynasty's business acumen soon led to the ubiquity of amber beads in Italian domestic inventories.⁴⁹

Amber and Sensory Experience in Counter-Reformation Italy

Found almost without exception in Prussia and understood by Prussians to be a sign of God's favour, why was amber so liked in Italy? Just as

⁴⁴ "Inventarium hereditatis excellentissimi domini Federici ducis Mantuae", Mantua, Archivio di Stato (henceforth ASMan), Estensioni notarili, vol. K, fol. 152r: 'uno vasettino de ambra gialla', reproduced in Ferrari D., *Le collezioni Gonzaga: L'inventario dei beni del 1540–1542*, Fonti, repertori e studi per la storia di Mantova: Inventari (Cinisello Balsamo: 2003) 51–351.

⁴⁵ This information was kindly provided by Dr. Barbara Furlotti.

⁴⁶ Inventory of all figures, paintings and other things in the Tribuna (1589), ABU, MS 70, fol. 15r, 23g: 'una gabbia d'ambra gialla'. Inventory reproduced by the Fondazione Memofonte, www.memofonte.it/home/files/pdf/inv.236.pdf. See also Inventory of the Guardaroba and of the Palazzo del Casino (1587), Florence, Archivio di Stato (henceforth ASF), Guardaroba Medicea 136, fols. 153r–161r (1577), here fol. 156r: 'una artigliera di ambra gialla, lunga braccia 0/3 [8.7 cm.]', reproduced in Barocchi P. – Gaeta Bertelà G. (eds.), Collezionismo mediceo e storia artistica I: Da Cosimo I a Cosimo II (1540–1621), 2 vols. (Florence: 2002), vol. I, 326–347.

⁴⁷ GStA PK, XX HA Ostpreußische Folianten, 12822, fol. 42r, dated Venice, 10 October 1557.

⁴⁸ For example, Berengo A., Lettres d'un marchand vénitien Andrea Berengo (1553–1556) présentées par Ugo Tucci, Affaires et gens d'affaires 10 (Paris: 1957) 96, 110–113, 188–195, 202–203, 206–218, 220–224, 317.

 $^{^{49}\,}$ Israel died in Genoa in 1572 and Paul in 1584. Jaski's great-grandson Andreas died in Rome in 1632, see Tesdorpf, Gewinnung 15 n. 2.

Lutherans did, Roman Catholic authors also saw amber as a metaphor for religious experience. Like Göbel in Prussia, Ulisse Aldrovandi, a contemporary Italian, used the image of amber's hardening as a metaphor for the confirming effect of living in fear of God:

[...] human flesh imitates amber's soft beginnings and, thereafter, its hardness and brightness, inasmuch as, in its beginning, that is while it is involved in the vanities of the world, it does not lack the softness of pleasures, but at the time of the resurrection, having been hardened by divine heat, and shining, it [the flesh] will appear the image of amber. Or it may be said, that although men are soft by their nature and prone to committing certain transgressions, beset by the cold of divine fear or by the heat of human calamities they become hard through constancy and perseverance, nevertheless.⁵⁰

And equally, just as the Prussian Göbel had been able to identify with amber and the trials it had endured to become a thing of beauty, Aldrovandi was also able to derive moral lessons about the dangers of Protestantism from the creatures and insects trapped inside of it. Amber's famous inclusions became, for example, an apt metaphor for the heretic entrapped by false beliefs:

 $[\ldots]$ amber, while still soft and sticky, engulfs many living things, which are not at all able to extricate themselves from it; heretics are of this nature, who easily bear down many men's incautious souls, which are engulfed by the stickiness of transgressions.⁵¹

But amber's exegetical potential only played a restricted role in amber's appeal. The clue as to why Italians liked amber is in where they went to buy it.

Sumptuary laws restricted the right to sell amber to certain groups. In early seventeenth-century Bologna, for example, this fell to the mercers.⁵² In Venice too, the city's mercers claimed the wholesale of German prayer

⁵⁰ Aldrovandi Ulisse, *Musaeum metallicum in libros IV* (Bologna, Giovanni Battista Ferroni: 1648) 414: 'Praeterea humana caro mollem succini ortum, deinde eius etiam duritiam, et splendorem aemulabitur: quandoquidem in suo ortu, nimirum dum in his mundi vanitatibus versatur, mollitie delitiarum non caret, sed tempore resurrectionis, divino durata calore rutilans, instar electri, apparebit. Aut dicendum erit, quod, licet homines a primordio sint molles, et ad quaelibet crimina perpetranda proni, nihilominus frigore divini timoris, vel calore humanarum calamitatum perculsi, constantia et perseverantia durescunt'.

⁵¹ Aldrovandi, *Musaeum metallicum* 414–415: 'amplius succinum adhuc molle et tenax multas animantes implicat, quae inde se explicare minime possunt: huius naturae sunt haererici [sic], qui incautas multorum animas criminum lentore implicatas facile opprimunt'.

 $^{^{\}hat{5}2}$ Statuti dell' Honoranda compagnia de' merciari della magnifica città di Bologna (Bologna, Giovanni Battista Ferroni: 1605) 17.

beads, but it is worth noting that the already-mentioned Francesco Cappello and Francesco da l'Anzolo were perfumers.⁵³ That amber's sale fell to these professions says something about the roots of amber's appeal. Mercers dealt in amber because beads of it had recently begun to be used for the embellishment of textiles. Amber shared the appearance of crystal, agate, glass and even diamonds, which in this period were often vellow due to impurities, but had none of their heaviness (amber floats in saltwater) and was being innovatively turned into cylindrical beads to allow it to lie close to fabric.⁵⁴ Princely account books record their acquisition by embroiderers: in Mantua, in 1583, Cesare Passetti took delivery of 6,000 pieces, probably to attach to garments.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, amber was also affixed to belts, made into buttons, and woven into hairnets.⁵⁶ Perfumers, on the other hand, sold amber beads to be used in bodily embellishment. In sixteenth-century Europe, according to one author, amber had found favour as an alternative to gold now that gold 'had become common to everyone'. 57 In England, in Germany and in Italy, amber beads had become popular as a component of jewellery, ⁵⁸ explaining the three unusual strings of amber with chalcedony, amber with jasper and amber with cornelian in Francesco da l'Anzolo's shop.⁵⁹ It was also being increasingly used to perfume the body. Powdered raw amber or powdered bead amber was mixed with oils and water to make scented and coloured ointments with which

⁵³ Chambers D. – Pullan B. – Fletcher J. (eds.), *Venice: A Documentary History 1450–1630*, Renaissance Society of America Reprint Texts 12 (Toronto – London: 2001) 281–285.

⁵⁴ See the set of 49 cylindrical beads reproduced in Mierzwińska E., *Kunstschätze aus Bernstein: Die Sammlung des Schlossmuseums Marienburg bei Danzig* (Augsburg: 1996) 53 (cat. no. 71).

⁵⁵ Mantua, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Gonzaga 1513, VII, fol. 519, letter from Paolo Moro in Venice to Cesare Pasetti dated 23rd April 1583, reproduced in Sogliani D., *Le collezioni Gonzaga. Il carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1563–1587)*, Fonti repertori e studi per la storia di Mantova (Cinisello Balsamo: 2002) 319, doc. 559.

⁵⁶ For a hairnet, see Musacchio J.M., "Lambs, Coral, Teeth, and the Intimate Intersection of Religion and Magic in Renaissance Tuscany", in Cornelison S.J. – Montgomery S.B. (eds.), *Images, Relics, and Devotional Practices in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 296 (Tempe, AZ: 2006) 139–156, 148.

⁵⁷ Ubaldini Petruccio, *Descrittione del regno di Scotia, et delle isole sue adiacenti* [...] (Antwerp, s.n.: 1588) 50–51: 'le donne nobili l'usano hoggi molto in bracioletti, & graciosamente più che di oro; poiche l'oro è venuto commune ad ogni una'. Ubaldini's text is a free translation of Boece Hector, *Scotorum historiae a prima gentis origine* (Paris, Josse Bade: 1526). Cf. Zeiller Martin, *Topographia electoratus Brandenburgici et ducatus Pomeraniæ* (Frankfurt am Main, heirs of Matthias Merian: 1652) 5.

⁵⁸ Mattioli Pietro Andrea, *Il Dioscoride dell'eccellente dottor medico m. P. Andrea Matthioli da Siena* (Venice, Vincenzo Valgrisi: 1550) 141.

⁵⁹ See note 35.

to perfume the skin, gloves and caps.⁶⁰ Bead amber was also employed in potpourris or added to candles to give them a scent.⁶¹ For an intense and lingering smell, believed to simultaneously perfume and sanitise the air, amber was cast on the fire or on a red-hot iron,⁶² and the smoke given off by burning wet amber was even believed to exorcise evil spirits.⁶³

In fact, amber's idiosyncratic perfume had been known since antiquity, when the author Martial had compared it to the kiss of a lover.⁶⁴ By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, natural philosophers were relying on smell as a tool and consulting their noses in order to make insightful pronouncements about amber's nature. According to Lodovico Moscardo and Pierandrea Mattioli, a 'manifest smell of pine [was] left on fingers which had stroked it'.⁶⁵ They used amber's perfume to argue that Pliny had been correct when he had hypothesised that amber was 'the gum of a pine'.⁶⁶ Non-supporters of this thesis did not make this comparison. Georg Agricola, for example, for whom amber was a type of bitumen, likened amber's odour to bitterly aromatic camphor.⁶⁷

Thanks to the most common form in which Italians engaged with amber – the rosary – an intimate sensory knowledge of amber's material characteristics was not, however, the erudite knowledge of scholars who had sought to understand amber better, but the experience of anybody who had prayed using one. It was well known in Italy, and had been known since classical times, when, according to Juvenal their antecedents had

⁶⁰ Garzoni Tomaso, *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (Venice, Giovanni Battista Somasco: 1587) 651–652; Raimondi Eugenio, *Il novissimo passatempo, pollitico, istorico, & ecconomico* (Venice, Bertani: 1639) 409–410; Donzelli Giuseppe, *Teatro farmaceutico, dogmatico, e spagirico* (Rome, M. Hercole: 1677) 399–400.

⁶¹ Leo Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa* (London, Georg Bishop: 1600) 231 discusses making tapers of wax mixed with amber, which are both good for giving light and yielding fragrance.

⁶² Agricola, *De natura fossilium* 76–77 and Browne Joseph, *A Practical Treatise of the Plague, and All Pestilential Infections that have Happen'd in this Island for the Last Century* (London, printed for J. Wilcox: 1720) 25–26, 50, 59, 60, 61, 74 for amber-based treatments.

⁶³ Bonardo Giovanni Maria, *La minera del mondo* [...] *nella qual si tratta delle cose più secrete* (Venice, Fabio and Agostin Zoppini: 1585), fols. 19r–v, 24v–25r, 27r on amber.

⁶⁴ Martial, *Epigrams*, ed. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb Classical Library 94 (Cambridge, MA – London: 1993) 1, III.65.

⁶⁵ Moscardo Lodovico, *Note overo Memorie del museo di Lodovico Moscardo* [...] *dal medesimo descritte* (Verona, s.n.: 1672) 132: 'il che chiaramente conosce il odore dall'odore del Pino, che rende, mentre si stropiccia l'ambra'. See also Mattioli, *Il Dioscoride* 143: 'Corrobora, che sia il succino gomma d'albero simile al pino, il manifesto odore del pino, che ne lascia, stropicciandolo con le dita'.

⁶⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, trans. D.E. Eichholz, Loeb Classical Library 419 (Cambridge, MA – London: 1962) XXXVII, 43.

⁶⁷ Agricola, De natura fossilium 63.

used balls of amber to draw the sweat away from their hands, that amber responded to the temperature of the palms and transferred its scent to them in the process.⁶⁸ He or she who prayed with an amber rosary would have noticed the growing coolness of their own hands as the beads themselves increased in warmth; almost as though their prayers were actually capable of spiritually enlivening the material. Equally, anybody who had used an amber rosary would have also known that 'when rubbed with the fingers [amber] attracts light objects to itself' for friction caused amber to become palpably loaded with a static charge (technically known as triboelectricity). As a result, they would also have understood Aldrovandi's comparison of amber with humankind's innate greed, when he continued that 'man, warmed by the heat of worldly matters, draws to himself and embraces all temporal goods, which are of no value', or his comparison with 'Christ Lord' who 'burning with the heat of his love draws vain sinners to himself'.69 Thus using an amber rosary was a complex and, sometimes, contradictory sensory experience. Amber looked heavy, but it was light. It looked like glass, but it became heated and retained this warmth. It attracted things to it, as a magnet did iron. These phenomena were the palpable tactile results of intimate engagement with the material – an intensifying sensory proof that one's prayers were effecting something beyond normal human comprehension.

Praying with an amber rosary was much more than simply an experience in which the stone and the tactile senses were awakened. These sensory experiences had connotations for those partaking of them. As discussed above, warmed amber also emitted a smell and one uncharacteristic of true minerals. For many who experienced the smell of heated or burning amber, their immediate association was with the Church. In 1546, according to one popular – but certainly exaggerated – anecdote, a group of shepherds found a piece of amber 'larger than the body of an ox' on the coast of Buchan, Northeast Scotland. They did not know what it was or what to do, but observing that its perfume was like the incense usually

⁶⁸ Juvenal, *The Satires of Juvenal and Persius*, trans. G.G. Ramsay, Loeb Classical Library 91 (London: 1918) 5.

⁶⁹ Aldrovandi, *Musaeum metallicum* 414: 'Nisi velimus asserere hanc similitudinem inter succinum et hominem cadere propter varias succini mutationes; cum interdum sit molle, aliquando durum et attritu digitorum quaelibet levia ad se trahat: assimiliter homo est varius, cum in sacris paginis legatur, quod homo stultus mutatur ut luna. Namque homo rerum mundanarum calore fotus, omnia bona temporalia, quae nullius sunt valoris, ad se trahit, et amplectitur'. / 'Item succinum nonnisi excalfactum levia quaeque corpora ad se trahit: pariter Christus Dominus charitatis aestu ardescens vanos peccantes ad se allicit'.

burnt during the Mass, they decided to deliver it to the local priest.⁷⁰ By the mid 1500s, and with Jaski's encouragement, raw amber was increasingly being used 'in the place of incense' and, as the shepherds' story demonstrates, amber's smell had become intimately connected with public worship in the popular imagination.⁷¹

But inhaling amber's smell not only meant being sensorially reminded of a sacred context, or – if still lingering on the fingertips – of one's already offered up prayers, one might also consciously use it in one's personal devotions. Writing in 1551, Duke Albrecht's court physician, Andreas Aurifaber, noted that it had become common to carry amber-handled whips to 'combat all types of stenches, for when amber is rubbed it emits a pleasant smell, which wonderfully promotes the spiritus animales'.72 Aristotle had postulated gradations from inert and inanimate matter to plants through to animals and humans. The latter distinguished themselves from the former by merit of their powers of perception. Man was not, however, constantly perceptive. He needed external stimuli to inspire him. His powers of perception were not believed to be awakened until impulses caused by impact of external objects upon the sensory organs had travelled to and been united in the central sensorium.⁷³ With his nod to the 'spiritus animales', Aurifaber was encouraging readers who wanted to stimulate perceptiveness, and with it receptivity, to go out and smell amber. Such beliefs certainly also had a role to play in amber's employment in prayer beads and it is not for nothing that Andreas Jaski, Paul Jaski's descendant, presented Laurentius Gembicki, Bishop of Culm, with both an amber rosary and an amber whip handle in 1609.74

Indeed, rosaries were actually deliberately strung to increase the possibility that amber would emit its fleeting smell. Natural philosophers argued that this was always present, but that it became especially pungent when

⁷⁰ Ubaldini, Descrittione 50, 'maggiore del corpo di un bue'.

⁷¹ Agricola, De natura fossilium 76.

Aurifaber, *Succini historia* unpaginated: 'X.10. Es ist diese zeit gebreuchlich, das jr viel Boernsteinen peitzschen tragen / wider allerley gestanck / den so der Boernstein gerieben wird / gibet er uber aus einen lieblichen geruch von sich / welcher wunderbarlich die spiritus animales recreiret / und alle verstopffung des gehirns eroeffnet / derwegen des Boernsteins geruch nicht weniger die gesundheit erhelt und foerdert / als aller ubel ruch schadet und hindert'.

 $^{^{73}}$ Gallop D., "Aristotle: Aesthetics and Philosophy of Mind", in Furley D. (ed.), Routledge History of Philosophy, 2 vols. (London: 1999), vol. II (Aristotle to Augustine), 76–108, esp. 96–99.

⁷⁴ Czihak E. von, "Der Bernstein als Stoff des Kunstgewerbes", *Die Grenzboten: Zeitschrift für Politik, Literatur und Kunst* (1899) 179–189, 288–298, here 291.

rubbed and warmed.⁷⁵ For this reason, amber rosaries were commonly made of large beads interspersed with small beads or beads of ascending size, since threading differently-sized beads or faceting them created brims, edges and brinks to interrupt the hand's natural path, generate friction and create heat [Figs. 1, 2, 3]. With heat came smell, and praying with the aid of a rosary not only helped the devotee to keep track of his prayers, it also had the function of creating a sacred olfactory environment, in which his receptivity was also heightened. When prayers were over, the lingering smell of amber left on his fingers had the ability to evoke memories of personal spirituality each time the hand was brought towards the face and the nose. In short, the haptic – running the beads through the fingers, feeling their lightness, warmth and sometimes even an electrical charge – and the olfactory – smelling its unusual scent both on the beads and on the fingers – not only meant an intensification of worship but also its optimisation.

Aurifaber also noted that sniffing amber whip handles would help to 'open all blockages of the brain'. 76 In Rome and in some Umbrian towns, apothecaries sold raw amber and amber beads and, for many, praying with the aid of amber would have had clear medical benefits too. Thanks to the widespread belief that its smell shielded against dangerous miasmas hanging in the air, inhaling amber was marketed as a pre-emptive treatment in times of plague. For those using prayer beads, the odour of rubbed amber was also a prophylactic. Carrying, praying with and sniffing beads both helped one to come closer to God and staved off the chance that one would be whisked before him having caught something nasty. Indeed, the simple amber rosary was a versatile component of many treatments. To strengthen the heart, patients were advised to drink water in which an amber rosary had been soaked.⁷⁷ A similar drink – with wine rather than water – was to be taken by pregnant women in order to render the foetus less heavy. 78 When it came to labour, simply holding a chaplet of amber was believed to ease the birth.⁷⁹ And once a child was born, its wrists and necks were often encircled with strings of amber beads for

⁷⁵ Gimma Giacinto, *Della storia naturale delle gemme, delle pietre, e di tutti i minerali, ovvero della fisica sotterranea*, 2 vols. (Naples, Gennaro Muzio: 1730), vol. I, 389.

⁷⁶ See note 72.

⁷⁷ Georg Duncker's thesis on the origins of amber as a medicine (circa 1538), GStA PK, XX HA, Etatsministerium 16a 5, fols. 2r–4v, here 4r.

⁷⁸ Boodt Anselmus de, *Le Parfaict Joaillier ou Histoire des pierreries*, trans. Jean Bachou (Lyon, Huguetan: 1644) 418–422 and 424 on the health benefits of amber.

⁷⁹ GStA PK, XX HA, Etatsministerium 16a 5, fol. 4r.

protection. Several inventories refer to charms of amber, suggesting that ideas about amber's ability to strengthen a child's heart and defend it against poison, bewitching and nocturnal spirits were influential in Italy. Although the fading of pigments and discolouration of varnishes over the course of several hundred years makes distinguishing amber from coral or glass difficult, some paintings do in fact appear to show such protective amber amulets wrapped around the wrists and hanging from the necks of infants.⁸⁰

'A Material of Luxury and Piety in One'81

In Italy an amber rosary was much more than just an aid to prayer. For Italian women praying using an amber rosary provided another way of engaging with a material which had seen them safely through pregnancy and birth, and protected their children during infancy. Rosaries were also exactly the type of objects which subtly expressed kin- or friendship when given as gifts. It was presumably in the context of pre-natal wellbeing and sorority then that, in 1629, Claudia de' Medici was sent an amber rosary by her sister Catherine during the first trimester of her pregnancy. Men too used amber rosaries to cement relationships. Studying in Rome in 1640, Jan Ługowski from Krakow wrote to his father, asking him:

to be gracious enough to have a rosary sent here, or some other object made of amber. For I have made the friend of a certain Roman and have many proofs of his affection. He has given me to understand that he would wish to have something beautiful from Poland. As I replied nothing to this, he pressed further, asking whether I could not give him some amber rosary.⁸³

Gift exchanges such as these and the meanings associated with them may be one reason why many devotional ambers listed in Italian inventories were not always stored in sacred contexts. In the Palazzo Pamphilj on Piazza Navona in Rome, or in the Palazzo Barberini in the same city, amber figures of the Virgin were displayed in glass-fronted cabinets in

 $^{^{80}}$ For a discussion of coral talismans in Renaissance painting vis-à-vis inventory accounts of the material, see Musacchio, "Lambs, Coral, Teeth" 151–153. This problem is also highlighted by Trusted, *European Ambers* 10.

⁸¹ See note 42 for the source of this quote.

⁸² ASF, Mediceo del Principato 6108, fol. 710r, letter from Claudia de' Medici in Innsbruck to Caterina de' Medici in Siena, dated 3 February 1629.

⁸³ Grabowska J., Polish Amber, trans. E. Harris (Warsaw: 1983) 21.

public rooms,84 and it seems probable that Francesco de' Medici's stanzino in the Palazzo Medici played home to the prayer beads and an amber crucifix given to Francesco by Johann Friedrich of Pomerania in 1578.85 By the early seventeenth century, amber turners had mastered the production of virtually all of the objects required for the celebration of the mass.86 Yet, as frequently as these furnished chapels, such objects were also part of Kunstkammer collections. Stored together in closed cabinets with gems, ostrich eggs and Turkish hunting gear, Martin Zeiller recorded amber statuettes of the twelve Apostles as part of the Este's larger collection of artificialia and naturalia in the Sala di Troia in Mantua's ducal palace.87 Meanwhile, the most famous rosary in seventeenth-century Rome, a string of beads in which every example enclosed a different type of fly, was not in a sacristy but rather in Doctor Giovambattista Rinalducci's private collection of 'cose straniere'.88 Though Galileo Galilei had compared entering the 'study of some little man with a taste for curios' like 'a fly or spider embedded in a piece of amber' to the experience of reading Torquato Tasso's Gerusalemme liberata, there was actually nothing sacred about these contexts,89 and, where the unity of materials formed

⁸⁴ For a display case housing ambers in the Doria Pamphilj's palazzo on the Piazza Navona see Rome, Archivio Doria Pamphili, MS Scaff. 86. N. 23, fols. 1997-v, reproduced in Garms, *Quellen aus dem Archiv Doria-Pamphilj* 364–424; for one belonging to the brothers Agostino and Giovan Donato Correggio, see Inventory of Agostino and Giovan Donato Correggio (1574) ASV, Fraterna grande di S. Antonin, Commissaria Correggio, busta 6, fol. 1097, reproduced by the Getty Provenance Index doc. I-3642; and for one in the Palazzo Barberini in Rome, see Keyssler Johann Georg, *Travels through Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, and Lorrain*, 4 vols. (London, s.n.: 1758), vol. III, 136.

⁸⁵ Wehrmann M., "Beziehungen pommerscher Fürsten zu Florenz", *Baltische Studien Ser. NF.* 18 (1914) 57–82.

⁸⁶ See the ambers known to have been in Maria Maddalena d'Austria's cappella in the Palazzo Pitti noted in Aschengreen-Piacenti, *Il Museo degli Argenti* 158–160. Cf. Gimma, *Della storia naturale delle gemme*, vol. I, 393 on the donation of an amber lamp, cruets, foot of the gold communion goblet, candlesticks, basin and pax to the Santa Casa at Loreto by the wife of the Polish Grand Chancellor.

⁸⁷ Zeiller Martin, *Topographia Italiae: Das ist: Warhaffte und curiöse Beschreibung von gantz Italien* (Frankfurt am Main, the heirs of Matthias Merian: 1688) 50–52.

⁸⁸ Compare Kircher Athanasius, Magnes, sive de arte magnetica opus tripartitum (Cologne, s.n.: 1643) 567; Legati Lorenzo, Museo Cospiano annesso a quello del famoso Ulisse Aldrovandi e donato alla sua patria (Bologna, Giacomo Monti: 1677) 50; Terzago Paolo Maria, Museo o galeria adunata dal sapere, e dallo studio del signore canonico Manfredo Settala (Tortona, for the heirs of Eliseo Viola: 1666) 57; and Gimma, Della storia naturale 395 from which this quote comes.

⁸⁹ Galilei G., *Opere di Galileo Galilei*, Classici italiani 204–216, 13 vols. (Milan: 1808–11), vol. IX, 69: 'Mi è sempre parso e pare, che questo poeta sia nelle sue invenzioni oltre tutti i termini gretto, povero e miserabile; e all'opposito, l'Ariosto magnifico, ricco e mirabile: e quando mi volgo a considerare i cavalieri con le loro azioni e avvenimenti, come anche

the basis of a collection's arrangement, the emphasis was not on form but rather on their fabric. 90

In Italy, this 'fabric' was exceedingly expensive. Around 1520, Simon Grunau, a Dominican monk from Tolkemit (Tolkmicko) in Prussia had acquired a 'heart of gold-gleaming amber, a half-finger in length [...] carved [with] the image of John the Baptist as a child' to present to an unidentified cardinal. He boasted that the heart had only cost him 15 soldi, but had been valued at 2,000 florins when it arrived in Rome. Far away from its place of finding, amber had a high intrinsic material value and skilful craftsmanship increased this further. Indeed, so valuable were simple beads of amber that, during the papal conclave in 1549/50, the Venetian ambassador Matteo Dandolo saw cardinals wagering their amber rosaries on the length of their confinement. During the same conclave, Margaret of Austria presented Cristoforo Madruzzo, the Cardinal of Trent, with a costly amber rosary and the thinly veiled message 'that he well knew how to make such a pope as would be confirmed by the emperor'. Page 1520, Simon
tutte l'altre favolette di questo poema, parmi giusto d'entrare in uno studietto di qualche ometto curioso, che si sia dilettato di adornarlo di cose che abbiano, o per antichità o per rarità o per altro, del pellegrino, ma che però sieno in effetto coselline, avendovi, come saria a dire, un granchio petrificato, un camaleonte secco, una mosca e un ragno in gelatina in un pezzo d'ambra, alcuni di quei fantoccini di terra che dicono trovarsi ne i sepolcri antichi di Egitto, e così, in materia di pittura, qualche schizzetto di Baccio Bandinelli o del Parmigiano, e simili altre cosette'.

⁹⁰ Most famously the collections at Schloss Ambras, an introduction to which can be gained from Schleicher E., "The Collection of Archduke Ferdinand II at Schloss Ambras: Its Purpose, Composition and Evolution", in Impey O. – MacGregor A. (eds.), *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: 1985) 29–38.

⁹¹ Grunau S., "Preußische Chronik", in *Die preußischen Geschichtsschreiber des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: 1896), vol. III, 50–51: 'Kunst. Item man sneidet aus diesem stein [amber] seer behende bilde unde sy man hott anderswie in groser achtungk. Ich hett im iar 1520 eine sache zu Rome vor Leon idem X, so kunt ich nicht signaturam einer supplication haben, dorumb ich ging ad Joannem cardinalem sanctorum quatuor und schanckte im ein herzte von bornstein eines mannes halben finger langk, in welchem war ein gesnitten bilde, ein Jhesusbilde wie ein kindlein, von weisem klaren leuchtendem bornstein in goltleuchtendem bornstein und is wardt umb 2 tausendt gulden geschetz vorm bobiste zu der zeit von allen, es stundt aber in Preussen 9 pfirdingk'. This account differs slightly from the text printed in 1677 in which the image is of St. John as a child, see Grunau Simon, "Simonis Grunovii, Monachi Ordinis Praedicatorum Tolkemitani Chronici", in *Succini Prussici physica & civilis historia: cum demonstratione ex autopsia & intimiori rerum experientia deducta* (Frankfurt am Main, Martin Hallevord, Johannes Andreas: 1677) 154–164, here 156–157.

⁹² Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries in Northern Italy, ed. R. Brown (London: 1873) 5, doc. 627, dated 15 January 1550.

And exactly herein lies the crux of the problem for, as Commendone himself noted, 'amber was a material of luxury and piety both'. After 1518 the trade in amber beads to Southern Europe, specifically Italy, by no means ceased. Indeed, it grew and the very fact that amber was popular for both secular and sacred reasons caused conflicts to arise. Part of an amber rosary's appeal was rarity of the material, not to mention its curious sensory properties, but it was also this rarity and curiosity which made it immensely valuable, indeed, expensive enough to be used in bets and bribes. The most appealing of these properties were its tactile qualities and scent, particularly amber's ability to anoint the fingers with a lingering perfume reminding the devotee of his or her prayers. In contemporary texts this scent was believed to open a channel between the outer and the inner and to inspire greater awareness in its inhaler. Yet, just as, on the one hand, raw amber was burned as incense in the church, it was also added to potpourris in the home on the other. It was smelt on the hands through which a rosary had passed but also on those which had worn fashionable scented gloves or dyed furs in which amber was also employed as a perfume and colourant. Where was the line between sacred sensory stimulation and secular sensory gratification in Counter-Reformation Italy? The field between them was obviously somewhat grey. The consequences, however, were clear. One Jesuit priest spelled out what would await those who had indulged their senses in life. It not only involved going to hell and inescapable torture there but also being forced to smell and taste amber for eternity.93

⁹³ Camporesi P., *The Fear of Hell: Images of Damnation and Salvation in Early Modern Europe*, trans. L. Byatt (Cambridge: 1991) 58–69.

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'THE MELODIE OF HEAVEN': SERMONIZING THE OPEN EAR IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND*

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'In the beginning' - the Gospel of John reminds us - there 'was the Worde', and 'that Worde was God' (*John* 1:1). Ouoting this scripture, the seventeenth-century English minister John Brinsley characterizes preachers as the heralds of God embodied in the Word and urges his audience to open their ears as 'hearers'. Indeed, their acoustic openness is the greater responsibility. For spiritual salvation 'requires not euery man's mouth to preach it; yet his eare' to 'receiue' and 'vphold it'. Brinsley's sermon, entitled The Preachers Charge and Peoples Duty about Preaching and Hearing of the Word (1631), is representative of the religious discourse championing the ear that flourished around the turn of the seventeenth century. By attending to the auditory metaphors found in these religious writings, particularly in terms of sounding and interiority, my study is necessarily indebted to the influential scholarship of Wes Folkerth and Bruce Smith whose work has brought much needed attention to the vital role of sound in early modern culture. While 'our knowledge of early modern England is based largely on words', as Smith attests, the evidence that survives 'suggests that those words had a connection to spoken language' and to hearing as an experience 'that was stronger and more persuasive than we assume in our own culture'. In fact, within a forty-year span from roughly 1590–1630, multiple sermons on the 'role of hearing' and attentive ears in church reached print, and were reprinted according to popular demand.⁵

^{*} I am grateful to Elizabeth Harvey for her perceptive and encouraging comments on this essay. This chapter is for Travis.

¹ The Geneva Bible facsimile reprint, ed. L.E. Berry (Madison: 1969).

² Brinsley John, *The Preachers Charge and Peoples Duty about Preaching and Hearing of the Word* (London, R. Bird: 1631) 9–10.

³ Brinsley, *The Preachers Charge*, from the dedication to the 'vvorshipfvll, sir Iohn VVentwork', emphasis mine.

⁴ Smith B.R., The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O Factor (Chicago: 1999) 13.

⁵ Folkerth reports that at least one sermon appeared in each decade: 'Robert Wilkinson's *A Jewell for the Eare* was first published in 1593, and was republished six times in the following thirty-two years; William Harrison's *The Difference of Hearers* was published

But what was it, I ask, that spurred this intensification of interest about the ear – and specifically the open ear – as a key component of religious experience?

One answer surely lies with the Protestant theologians.⁶ In the wake of the Reformation that swept across Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English Protestants attached new significance to their reverence for the spoken Word; their favouring of the ear over the eye became an essential means of distinguishing themselves from the spectacle of the popish Mass.⁷ Whereas the Latin liturgy centred on the visual ceremony of the Eucharist and its presentation, the Protestants orchestrated their service to highlight instead the vocal delivery of the sermon.

twice in 1614, then once again in 1625; and Stephen Egerton's *The Boring of the Eare* was brought into press posthumously in 1623 by Richard Crooke' (45). Wes Folkerth's book *The Sound of Shakespeare* (London: 2002) has been formative to my thinking about early modern ears, and it was his discussion of the 'doctrine of sound' that set the stage for my research. Folkerth treats several of the same sermons; however, my integration of the anatomical discovery of the Eustachian tube extends his insights into a new analysis of the preachers' reflections of medical metaphors and meanings. My work diverges from Folkerth's in that he summarizes these period texts in order to contextualize Shakespeare's theatrical use of sound whereas I focus on the sermons themselves to consider religious sound experience, and I demonstrate how anatomy and religion borrow from one another as continuous – rather than discrete – discourses of hearing.

⁶ There are many plausible hypotheses to account for this intensification of interest around ears in church, and the most frequently cited of these is indeed the Protestant Reformation's insistence on hearing the spoken word of God. Given that the attendants' perception of a sermon is largely dependent on distance mediated senses (namely sight and sound) rather than those based in contiguity (taste and touch), it follows that most contemporary authors contrasted the Catholic and Protestant churches in terms of eye versus ear. The abolition of incense in the sixteenth century, however, provides another interesting possibility for the increased emphasis on hearing. Whereas churches used to employ censing to unify their gatherers into one inhaling body through smell, the removal of these scents would have heightened other sensory perceptions, like sound. Nevertheless, what I wish to foreground in this essay is the anatomical discovery that spurred a new attention to hearing across disciplines.

⁷ Several examples can illustrate the general trend. Of the preachers considered in this essay, William Harrison inveighs most bitterly against the Catholic reliance on the eye. He remarks that it is 'well knowne that papists make small account of hearing Gods word preached' since 'they hope to be saued rather by sight then by hearing', though it is the 'hearing of the word' which is necessary for the 'saluation of their soules', not 'the sight of their abhominable idoll' (dedication). Stephen Egerton chooses to modify the gospel of John, changing the invitation to 'Come and see a man' into the acoustic appeal: 'let vs say, "Come and heare a man"' (31). Robert Wilkinson likewise stresses the vital importance of the ear, valuing it over the eye or any other part, because 'our Sauiour Christ saide, If thy right eie cause thee to offende plucke it out, if thy right hande cause thee to offende cut it off, but hee neuer saide, if thine ears offende thee stop it up' (11). Most famously, John Donne preached in 1625 that Saul was struck blind in order to enable him better to hear the Word of God, since 'man hath a natural way to come to God, by the eie [...] but then, God hath super-induced a supernaturall way, by the eare' (Smith 262).

As the preacher Ralph Brownrig observed, 'Popery is a religion for the eye; ours for the ear'. Of course this ready distinction between Catholic and Protestant services along the lines of sight versus sound in the period oversimplifies the broader sensory experience of churchgoing, ignoring the lost smell of incense, the taste of the host on the tongue, and the ever-present tactility of hard pew benches. Other essays in this volume trace these alternate lines of sensation, and while I acknowledge that sermonizing was in many ways a polysensory or even synaesthetic event, it is important to recognize that seventeenth-century religious authors consistently focused on the eye/ear dichotomy in their calls to acoustic attention.

Smith returns to this conventional discrepancy between the two liturgies by contrasting the twinned illustrations on the title-page of John Foxe's 1570 *Actes and Monumentes* (one image shows the shortcomings of vision by referencing inattention, the other depicts enlightened listeners in rapt audition). Michael O'Connell likewise argues that those Protestant reformers who accused Catholics of idolatry responded in turn with 'logolatry'. The unique religious climate fostered within early modern England by the Protestant rejection of visual appeal and 'the humanists' revival of classical rhetoric' gave rise to, what Brian Crockett has aptly called, 'a cult of the ear'. Where each of these scholars rightly identifies the turn towards aurality as at least a partial response to Reformation ideals, they all investigate how this disparagement of Catholic ostentation paradoxically relates to the performances of Protestant ministers in a theatrical register.

A second and, I would argue, equally valid answer to the question about the rising religious interest in ears and hearing derives from the domain of early modern science. No critic, to my knowledge, has yet explored the connection between the sermonizing of the ear and a medical register – despite the well-known and period-specific discovery of the Eustachian tube: the thin corridor connecting ear and throat.¹² Given

⁸ Brownrig Ralph, Twenty Five Sermons by the Right Reverend Father in God, Ralph Brownrig, Late Lord Bishop of Exeter (Cambridge, W. Martyn: 1664) 117.

⁹ Smith, The Acoustic World of Early Modern England 262.

¹⁰ O'Connell M., "The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm, Anti-Theatricalism, and the Image of the Elizabethan Theater", *English Literary History* (1985) 279–310, here 287.

¹¹ Crockett B., "'Holy Cozenage' and the Renaissance Cult of the Ear", *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 24 (1993) 47–65, here 51.

¹² Traditionally defined, the term 'sermonizing' means to deliver or compose a sermon: to 'preach' (OED). In the context of this essay, I use the phrase 'sermonizing the ear' to

that new anatomical theories about acoustic penetrability and the dangers of openness were circulating across the continent at this precise historical moment, it makes all the more sense that the ear should have become a locus for concerns about reaching the spiritual interior. Ever since Augustine invited God to 'whisper' through his ear into his listening 'heart' the ear has been lauded as a pathway to grace, but it was in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries that hearing became prized as the most important sense for salvation and, strikingly, that the rhetorical style of preaching about acoustic openness shifted following Bartolomeo Eustachio's discovery of the aural tube in 1564. 13 Responding to and appropriating the medical language of permeability, fluidity, and invasion that filtered into the wider culture, religious orators developed parallel metaphors of interiorized hearing. They also relished puns and wordplay between 'ear', 'hear', and 'heart' in their defence of the open ear: it was now more than ever the literal corridor to the heart. Accorded the ability to screen, prudently listen and 'best judge' sounds, and personified with the 'power to sound into the centre', the ear represented God's direct means of access into the deepest recesses of the soul.¹⁴ By tracing the crossover between anatomical and religious rhetoric I hope to help, in the larger picture, illustrate how early modern ideas about sensory perception were more interdisciplinary than our current models of thought. Contemporary sense theory tends to divorce scientific, artistic, and religious matters in Western culture, but in contrast the writings of these early modern preachers reveal how these overlapping discourses were harmonized. This essay interrogates the nature of early modern hearing by comparing the sermons of John Brinsely, Stephen Egerton, William Harrison, and Robert Wilkinson against the medical understandings of the ear advanced by Eustachio, Richard Crooke, and other physicians in order to probe religion's coded privileging of the acoustic. Whereas experimental science preferred the ostensibly objective eye, Protestant authors upheld the ear in contradistinction to reinforce the invisible operations of faith. By counterpoising religious and medical writings, my analysis demonstrates how theories about material penetration were altered to support religious

connect the figure of the preacher with an acoustic performance. That is, to sermonize is more than to address a hearer, it is to actively recruit and open the ear of the auditor through speech.

Augustine, Confessions, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: 1961) 24.

¹⁴ Brathwaite Richard, Essaies Vpon the Fiue Senses (London, R. Whittaker: 1620) 6.

claims about the immaterial assimilation of language into spirit through the ear.

In 1538, the duke of Urbino died under suspicious circumstances. Shortly thereafter, his barber-surgeon confessed to having murdered the duke, Francesco Maria I della Rovere, by pouring a tainted lotion into his ears. This striking aural poisoning is now widely believed to have inspired Shakespeare's representation of Claudius's crime, or pouring of a 'leperous distilment' into the 'porches' of his brother's 'ears' (1.5.59-65) in Hamlet (1601). 15 The adaptation of this Italian murder supposedly plotted by Luigi Gonzaga into the preeminent English stage play, Hamlet, as the 'Murder of Gonzago', establishes the ready communication of ideas surrounding the open ear between the continent and England. Moreover, it was the family of the unfortunate Duke of Urbino, specifically his brother Cardinal Giulio della Rovere, who first noted the emerging talents of Bartolomeo Eustachio and invited him to serve as their personal physician in 1547.16 It is no far stretch of the imagination to assume that Eustachio would have taken a heightened interest in the enigmatic anatomy of the inner ear, and its means of conducting fluids into the body, given his relation to these employers. Of course, as Basilio Aristidis Kotsias remarks, both the accusation against Ambroise Paré in 1560 and Marlowe's character Lightborn from Edward II (who blows a poisonous powder into his victim's ear) are two other examples of the popular fascination with murder via auditus.¹⁷ If these ideas of acoustic vulnerability held 'imaginative currency' in early modern England, then it is no wonder that religious authors would have also picked up on the news of Eustachio's discovery that 'spread quickly throughout Europe' and filtered into London by the turn of the seventeenth century.18

¹⁵ On acoustic poisoning, see Bullough G., Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, vol. VII, esp. pages 31–34 (London: 1973), Pollard T., "Vulnerable Ears: Hamlet and Poisonous Theater", in Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England (Oxford: 2005) 123–143, and Eden A.R. – Opland J., "Bartolomeo Eustachio's De Auditus Organis and the Unique Murder Plot in Shakespeare's Hamlet", The New England Journal of Medicine 307 (1982) 259–261.

¹⁶ For more on Eustachio's biography, see Well W., "Bartolommeo Eustachio: A Great Medical Genius Whose Chief Masterpiece Remained Hidden for One Hundred and Fifty Years", *Archives of Otolaryngology: Head and Neck Surgery* 48 (1948) 58–66, or Ghisalberti A. for the entry on "Eustachio" in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 43 (2009) 531–536.

¹⁷ Kotsias B.A., "Scopolamine and the Murder of King Hamlet", *Archives of Otolaryngology: Head and Neck Surgery* 128 (2002) 847–849.

¹⁸ Pollard, "Vulnerable Ears" 128–129.

Eustachio proudly proclaimed in his 1564 study of the ear, De auditus organis, that 'knowledge of this passage' - namely, the Eustachian tube that descends from the auditory concha into the nasal cavity and rearpalate - 'will be very useful to physicians' because 'now they will know that even thick materials' can be 'purged from the ears' by this 'very ample pathway' or, conversely, absorbed inwards through the same gateway.¹⁹ To give Eustachio his due, he was right. By the early 1600s word of the Eustachian tube had made its way into the best available English anatomies. While the surgeon John Banister does not directly cite Eustachio, or describe the ear's inward 'hollow cauities' in detail, his 'dilation' on the ear's varied 'Cartilaginous matter' and 'Gibbous places' echoes the Italian's findings.²⁰ Any link between Eustachio's writings and Banister's Historie of Man (1578) must be somewhat tenuous, although the author freely admits in his title that his text was 'sucked from the sappe of the most approued anathomistes, in this present age [...] and now published in English'. There can be no question of Eustachio's influence in England, however, once we turn to the most important tome on anatomy from the seventeenth century: Helkiah Crooke's Microcosmographia (1615). Crooke devotes an entire chapter from his eighth book on the senses to the 'Canale out of the Eare into the Mouth', and names 'Eustachius' the authority who 'first described it'. ²¹ He even reports contemporary English experiments using a dried skull and hog's bristle to prove for themselves that a fluid put into the 'hole of hearing' will soon 'issue out again in the palate of the mouth'.22 The diffusion of this medical knowledge from Italy to England is certainly interesting in itself, but I want to draw particular attention to the negative context in which this scientific discovery arose. From its first instantiation, the aural tube seemed a threateningly un-closable entrance to the body's core. Eustachio, Banister, and Crooke's depictions of the ear all employ a fearful language of openness: one of 'holes', 'perforations', 'damage', 'defence', and 'outward force'. Where anatomy in general tended towards the celebration of the eye as an instrument of science and cold

¹⁹ Eustachio Bartolomeo, *De auditus organis*, in idem, *Opuscula Anatomica* (Rome: 1564) 163; here translated by O'Malley C.D., "Bartolomeo Eustachi: An Epistle on the Organs of Hearing. An Annotated Translation", *Clio Medica* 6 (1971) 59.

²⁰ Banister John, The Historie of Man [...] sucked from the sappe of the most approued anathomistes, in this present age, compiled in most compendious fourme, and now published in English, for the vtilitie of all godly chirurgians, within this realme, by Iohn Banister, Master in Chirurgerie, and practitioner in phisicke (London: 1578) 38.

 $^{^{21}}$ Crooke Helkiah, Microcosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man $[\ldots]$ (London, W. Iaggard: 1615) 586.

²² Crooke, Microcosmographia 588.

observation, as Jonathan Sawday suggests, it distrusted the ear for its permeability.²³ Even the physicians' frequent repetitions about the ear's 'natural defenses' (such as wax, winding passages, and the overhanging pinnae) generate an impression of an always looming attack, as Pollard has perceptively noted.²⁴ For early modern anatomists, to have an open ear was to be at risk.

The religious presentation of acoustic openness is all the more surprising, therefore, in its polar opposition. In the preface to *The Boring of the Eare* (1623), Richard Crooke opines: 'Whosoeuer [...] hath dedicated himselfe to the seruice of the Lord, let him expresse his Obligation' by 'his open eare'. Robert Wilkinson confirms, in *A Jewell for the Eare* (1595), that it is 'by our eare more specially and expresselye' that 'we attaine to the knowledge of God's revealed will'. Openness, it would seem, is exactly what the Protestant preachers most desired. They felt that aural receptivity was not only requisite for faith but a 'spiritual blessing'. These sermons praise the open ear as a 'profitable' (Wilkinson A2), 'usefull' (Egerton A8), and 'fruitfull' (Harrison 12) organ for all believers. The ear provides a pathway for Christ to enter his hearers as the Word, so that he may 'ruleth like a King in the hearts of his people' and bring them 'by it to the Kingdome of grace here, and of glory hereafter'. To the religious orators, the properly opened ear is nothing short of miraculous.

But it is important to recognize that all of these religious sermons about hearing published in the early-seventeenth century emphasize that there is a *proper* way to hear.²⁹ For just as dutiful aural attention to God's Word rewards the 'right hearer' with spiritual profit and 'the sauour of life', a punishing 'sauour of death' comes 'vnto him that heareth not as hee ought'.³⁰ The government reinforced the idea that figurative deafness – to their legal decrees on theft, perjury, or slander – was such a 'dangerous and desperate case' that it merited a painful return to the literal: namely, the cutting off of ears or nailing of the earlobe to the pillory.³¹ As the

²³ Sawday J., *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: 1995).

²⁴ Pollard, "Vulnerable Ears" 129.

²⁵ Crooke Richard, "Foreword", in *The Boring of the Eare* (London, W. Stansby: 1623), fol. A7.

²⁶ Wilkinson Robert, A Jewell for the Eare (London, T. Pauyer: 1593) 11.

²⁷ Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 6.

²⁸ Brinsley, The Preachers Charge 11.

²⁹ Folkerth, Sound of Shakespeare 45-9.

³⁰ Crooke, "Foreword", fol. A7.

³¹ Crooke, "Foreword", fol. A7.

preface to Egerton's sermon warns, 'the next punishment vnto death by our Nationall law is losing the eares'. 32 While the ear is, at base, a 'fleshlve instrument', it can become the ultimate avenue to grace if it is used correctly.³³ Addressing his home parish in Horton, Kent, the English minister Robert Wilkinson encourages his auditors to yield their ears for the sake of their souls, and outlines a 'direction to teach men how to heare': 'because (beloved) by the hearing of the worde is so holye a thinge' that 'I have thought good [...] to laye downe a preparative, that wee may knowe, with what reverence wee are come into the temple, with what attention to heare, desire to learne, and eare to practise'.34 The didactic tone of Wilkinson's sermon is in keeping with the wider religious treatment of hearing in England. John Brinsley, Richard Crooke, Stephen Egerton, and William Harrison, all follow Wilkinson's example and preach their own instructions on how best to open one's ears. While Egerton begins by enumerating the five types of mishearers (who have either dull, blocked, sinister, itching, or adulterous ears), and where Harrison traces the difference between good and bad hearers, each preacher employs roughly the same structure: they prepare their auditors' ears before church, defend them against distractions in church, and school them on how best to absorb the Word after church. If we recall the 1559 Act of Uniformity that mandated weekly attendance at such sermons, it makes all the more sense that the rote pattern of these homilies was so familiar by 1650 that an anonymous author could distil 'severall arguments' into one simple, point-form list. Citing 'take heed therefore how yee Hear' (Luke 8:18) as 'every man's chiefest care!', the anonymous preacher offers an abbreviated description of 'things to be practised by those that would become profitable hearers, viz. 1. Somewhat before hearing; 2. Something in hearing; and 3. After hearing'. 35 The anonymous sermon, like that of Egerton, is designed to emphasize the oral and aural nature of preaching by representing a dialogue between 'Question' and 'Answer'. To be sure, the foregrounding of the Word and the attention to dutiful listening – rather than seeing – marks these sermons as distinctly Protestant.36 Yet, the question and answer style of

³² Crooke, "Foreword", fol. A7.

 $^{^{33}}$ Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 6.

³⁴ Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 1.

 $^{^{35}}$ Anonymous, Some Plain Directions for the More Profitable Hearing of the Word $[\ldots]$ (London, R. White: 1650) 1.

³⁶ For the sake of clarity, I group Brinsley, (Richard) Crooke, Egerton, Harrison, and Wilkinson together as Protestants. Yet, while each of these men was fundamentally opposed to Catholicism, there is a spectrum of affiliation to be mapped within their beliefs. For example, Egerton has been called not only a popular Protestant pastor [Green R.,

response seems especially suited to Egerton who was known to be fond of catechising, even altering the arranged worship in order to better forge 'aural unanimity'.³⁷ In every case, the preacher reminds his parishioners of the dangers of having closed ears, or 'having ears but hearing not', since 'sinfull soules can neuer bee healed' except through the right sort of active and interiorized hearing.³⁸

To hear properly, then, is not merely to listen to sounds but to be sounded: 'to attend with the eare, to receive with the heart, and to convert in the life'.³⁹ A truly open ear invites the Word to 'sink' into the heart's unseen depth.40 Whereas the anatomists view the open ear as a site of incursion or infection, the preachers extol openness as a virtue since it enables their deepest communion with God. In Brinsley's estimation, the spoken 'Word' is the 'summe' of Christ, and thus while the minister's speech may seem insubstantial, it actually possesses God's weighty 'substance' as the embodied spirit.⁴¹ This immaterial-material 'Word' is indicative of the mysterious nature of God, and it can be fully realized by the devout only through the open pathway of the ear. The gospel, or literally God's-spell (God's vocal news), supplants the troubling lotions and bristles of anatomy as it seeps inward through the ear. Returning to the Gospel of John, saying 'No man hath seene God at any time, but the onely begotten sonne of the Father, he hath declared him' (John 1:18), Brinsley upholds hearing as the sense that unlocks God's secret interior:

Declared, saith the Originall; the word signifieth to conduct, and direct, and leade a man [...] to the finding out of something that was hid before. The will of God was a thing that was locked vp in the breast of his secret counsell, a thing hidden from our eies, as the purpose of a mans heart is from the knowledge of another. Now Christ hath led vs to the knowledge of this

[&]quot;Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*", *English Studies in Canada* 31 (2005) 53–74, note 2; Tiffany G., "Hamlet and Protestant Aural Theater", in Batson B. (ed.), *Shakespeare's Christianity: The Protestant and Catholic Poetics of* Julius Caesar, Macbeth, *and* Hamlet (Waco: 2006) 73–90, 74], but more often a 'Puritan' and 'unrepentant non-conformist' [Tyacke N., *Aspects of English Protestantism c. 1530–1700* (Manchester: 2001) 116] as well as 'a zealous promoter of further reformation of the church, and an avowed advocate for the Presbyterian discipline' [Brook B., *The Lives of the Puritans*, vol. II (London, J. Black: 1813), 289]. As Smith notes, however, the difference between Protestants in the official Church of England and the Puritan reformers was a matter of degree, not kind (*The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* 268).

³⁷ Smith, The Acoustic World of Early Modern England 268.

³⁸ Crooke, "Foreword", fol. A4.

³⁹ Crooke, "Foreword", fol. A4.

⁴⁰ Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 12.

⁴¹ Brinsley, The Preachers Charge 10.

will by declaring of it, as a mans words lead another to the knowledge of the intents and purposes of his heart, and is therefore called $\it The Word.^{42}$

Seizing on the verb 'declare', Brinsley insists that hearing the spoken word aloud produces a profound material transaction. The Word is more than pure language; it is the fluid spirit of God that is absorbed into our private breasts to congeal within the heart as assimilated knowledge. And, even more astoundingly, Brinsley's simile compares the process of getting inside another man's heart through verbal sounding to the hearer's privileged access into God's 'breast' and 'secret counsell' via an openness to sound. The eye is useless in the perception of such truths because they are 'hidden' beneath the visible surface and require deeper faith. In Brinsley's account, the sonic experience of the Word allows us to penetrate the body of God in the same way that God's material body enters into the hearer through an open ear.

The ear is equally the site of material absorption through language, or hearing and speaking, in Wilkinson's metaphor of unlocking: 'these two are fitly compared to a locke and a key, for as the key openeth the lock and maketh entrance in at the doore, so the tongue of the minister shoulde open the ear of the hearer, that the spirite of knowledge and vnderstanding might passe into the heart'. 43 The continuity between the ear and the innermost centre of the body associated with the Eustachian tube becomes, in its religious manifestations, a physical explanation for the ability of God to cross into and reside within the heart. The recurring language of locks, thresholds, and doorways found throughout the sermons – in Egerton, where the servant's open ear is 'boared' at the 'doore of his house',44 and repeatedly in Wilkinson, as the 'ears bee the doore of the hart',45 where 'God never commeth so neere a mans soule as when he entreth in by the doore of the eare', and 'in vaine shal the voice of the preacher beate vpon the doors of our eares, vnless thou fill our hartes with thy spirite' - echo Eustachio's original description of the auditory canal that winds ever deeper into the throat as narrow cartilage until 'at the end of the same passage, there seems to be a kind of doorway'.46 While Wilkinson, Brinsley, and Egerton eagerly unlock the door of the ear to allow the acceptance of the Word, welcoming 'not every gueste, but the

⁴² Brinsley, *The Preachers Charge* 10.

⁴³ Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 4.

⁴⁴ Crooke, "Foreword", fol. A6.

⁴⁵ Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 7, 11, and 36.

⁴⁶ Eustachio, *De auditus organis* 162.

king of glorie [who] shall come in',⁴⁷ Harrison recommends acoustic vigilance and safekeeping the Word 'vnder locke and key'.⁴⁸ Harrison would approve of Helkiah Crooke's anatomical analogy wherein the 'strong gristle' at the end of the Eustachian tube becomes a personified 'Porter' to monitor and 'keep' the 'outlet' of the passage.⁴⁹ True, the door of the ear must be open enough to admit God, but it should also be guarded carefully so that the 'Diuell' cannot steal in 'to take the worde out of your hearts'.⁵⁰ In Harrison's sermon, those who are 'reputed good hearers' will use their ears as doors and their hearts as 'house[s]' where God will 'dwell in vs plenteously'.⁵¹ God's divine sound must cross the threshold of the ear, not like the affecting notes of a musician, he warns, but like the lasting 'receipt of a Physition, which worketh in the body a long time after it is taken'.⁵²

Harrison's reference to a physician alongside his description of acoustic permeability is apposite given that he borrows from the language of medicine in his account of the ear. Similarly, Egerton prescribes 'remed[ies]' against distractions in church in order to ensure proper and healthy hearing, and he even equates his chiding with a purgative drug, saying that while his 'rebukes' are 'tedious to the flesh, yet they are wholsome Medicines to the soule, and strong defences against Satan'.53 These preachers see themselves as spiritual doctors, because where they use painful probing to cleanse their hearers' ears for righteousness, so too does the 'Chirurgian' inflict 'painfull searching and incision' to 'heal' his patients.⁵⁴ In fact, Harrison refers to the art of 'Physicke' no less than seven times in his sermon on hearing. Discussing medicinal plasters and poultices, Harrison adopts the physician's discourse in order to signal the importance of the ear as a curative Christian organ: 'If then our hearts be corrupt, we must not onely be content to apply the word to the eares by hearing it [...] but also to the heart, for the purging of it'.55 In Harrison's formulation, like that of Brinsley's immaterial-material word above, Gonzaga's poison that corrupts the ear has become instead the surgeon's healing

⁴⁷ Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 7.

⁴⁸ Harrison William, The Difference of Hearers (London, W. Bladen: 1625) 48.

⁴⁹ Crooke, Microcosmographia 586.

⁵⁰ Harrison, *The Difference of Hearers* 47.

⁵¹ Harrison, The Difference of Hearers 194.

⁵² Harrison, *The Difference of Hearers* 195.

⁵³ Egerton Stephen, *The Boring of the Eare* (London, W. Stansby: 1623) 18 and 24.

⁵⁴ Egerton, The Boring of the Eare 25.

⁵⁵ Harrison, The Difference of Hearers 175.

purgative through the sounded Word of God. By adapting the language of early modern science, these pastors not only neutralize the apparent threat against the ear but transform it into a positive context for openness. Yet, strangely enough, the religious authors extend the same language of violent penetration found in the medical books. Harrison reflects on hearers 'whose hearts seeme to be [...] deepely pierced with the word'; Egerton invites his hearers to be physically drilled or 'bored' into by the 'Word of God', as if, in Richard Crooke's discomfiting simile, stabbed by a pointed 'Awle'; and Wilkinson merges the reiterated calls from a preacher with the repeated blows of a hammer, 'it may be that will pearce into the head at a second repetinge which at the first report would not, euen as a naile may be driven in at a seconde or third stroke, which could not at the first'. 56 These metaphors of piercing, stabbing, and nailing the vulnerable interior through the ear are counterintuitive in a call for openness. That the ministers should choose to liken the entrance of the divine Word to a physical assault on the heart is testament to the crossover in popular means of thinking about aural infiltration between science and religion.

Indeed, the ripple effect of this knowledge about the ear — wherein the tidings of Eustachio's medical discovery of a new auditory feature arose first as a niche subject for select readers and then expanded outwardly, and incrementally, until they permeated public understanding in the wide-reaching medium of state-enforced religious sermons — duplicates on a large scale the fluid metaphors of sound transmission used by anatomists and preachers alike. Early modern anatomists drew heavily upon classical ideas to theorize the reception of sound. Combining Aristotle's belief that noise is created by two objects forcibly striking each other and travelling to the ear through the medium of air, with the Stoic's analogy of sound movement as water waves, seventeenth-century doctors frequently turn to pools, streams, and ripples to represent acoustic propagation. Helkiah Crooke writes, in his description of the ear, that:

if a stone be throwne into the midst of a pond, it moueth the water in circles, one alwayes succeeding greater then another vntill the motion determine in the brinkes or bounds of the pond: so in like manner those bodyes which by their collision do make a sound, mooue the ayre into orbes or circles succeeding one another, so that the circles which are nearest to the body from whence the sound came are but small, the rest which follow them

 $^{^{56}\,}$ Harrison, The Difference of Hearers 95; Crooke, "Foreword", fol. A6; Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 28.

grow greater and greater vntill they come vnto the eare $[\ldots]$ directed vnto the hole of hearing.⁵⁷

Crooke's fluid waves seem prescient in their resemblance to modern sound waves, but it is imperative to recognize – as Penelope Gouk insists – that this is truly a metaphor, not physics: 'the precise way in which sound was like actual waves in water was not clarified until later in the seventeenth century with the work of Constantijn Huygens and Newton'.⁵⁸ Still, the analogy was sufficiently compelling that once again the scientific words used to characterize sound are repeated in the hearing metaphors of the sermons. Brinsley mixes the image of the doorway, saying 'that [God] would not onely set open a wide [...] dore' so that 'the Gospell may haue free passage' into our 'hearts', with the anatomist's fluid dynamic of sound, since God 'would bee pleased to water your inheritances with this dew of heauen'.59 To Brinsley, the ear is an organ 'euery way accommodated with all other requisite conueniences: you want nothing but the springs of [...] those liuing waters, flowing out from the Sanctuary'.60 He compares God's Word to a wellspring that refreshes the spirit in an acoustically enriched form of liquid communion. Harrison also relates the sound perception of the Word to a stream of water, citing the Apostles' teachings that hearers in church may be cleansed and purified by 'the washing of the water through the word'. 61 Richard Brathwaite similarly observes in his Essaies Vpon the Five Senses (1620) that the ear 'is open to receiue' because just 'as manie riuers have their confluence by small streames, so knowledge her essence by the accent of the eare'.62 A poet, natural philosopher, and self-proclaimed 'Christian', Brathwaite pens his essays on the five senses as an appeal to 'the devout', reminding them to translate each of their physical perceptions into a sensual experience of the 'Sauiour' in heaven. 63 Positioned in-between the anatomists and sermonizers on the open ear, Brathwaite embodies a further ripple in the same pool of acoustic discourse.

While anatomists emphasize that the 'chiefe vse' of the Eustachian tube is to take offensive fluids *out* of the body – that is, to 'expurgate' brain

⁵⁷ Crooke, Microcosmographia 577.

⁵⁸ Gouk P., "English Theories of Hearing in the Seventeenth Century", in Smith M. (ed.), *Hearing History: A Reader* (Athens, GA: 2004) 136–150, here 138.

⁵⁹ Brinsley, *The Preachers Charge* 25–26.

⁶⁰ Brinsley, The Preachers Charge 26.

⁶¹ Harrison, The Difference of Hearers 174.

⁶² Richard Brathwaite, Essaies Vpon the Fiue Senses 6.

⁶³ Brathwaite, Essaies Vpon the Fiue Senses 1.

'excrement' through the 'descending' canal or 'sweate' it across the tympanic membrane – their treatises expend considerable energy cataloguing the various infiltrators that make their way *in* via the ear.⁶⁴ John Banister praises the design of the eyes' lids and the ears' cartilaginous pinna, as forward-tending, 'stiffly' supported, and firmly 'borne' since it thereby generally averts the injuries 'offred by dust, or ech flyeng litle creature'.⁶⁵ Tanya Pollard cites two continental physicians, the surgeons Ambroise Paré and Christopher Wirtzung, who likewise remark on the 'little creeping things', 'fleas', and 'wormes' that hatch and 'grow in the Eares', in her examination of the vulnerable ear.⁶⁶ The English doctor Crooke takes comfort in the hairs of the auditory canal and its 'bilious viscide' or 'bitter' earwax that act as 'lime' to entangle 'such creatures' as well as any other 'thing that should happen to fall into the eare'.⁶⁷ Early modern fantasies of aural invasion frequently centre on the ear as a site for insect gestation and fertilization.

As unsettling as it is to imagine 'creeping things' venturing into the ear and laying their eggs, the idea of inseminating the ear is celebrated in the familiar Christian parable of the sower. The biblical tale of the farmer who spreads his seeds over four different types of terrain with varying rates of success and implantation is explained by Christ (in the Geneva Bible, Mark 4:3-24, Matt. 13:1-23, and Luke 8:5-18) as signifying the four different types of ears that attend his speech. Those who listen mindfully, who are open to receive him, and who sow the Word within their hearts are like the good ground that yields a hundredfold crop. Whereas those who are distracted, who only hear but do not listen, or who let the Word take shallow hold in them are akin to the thorny patch, rocky ground, and high road that bear no fruit. It is the exposition of this parable that underpins Harrison's The Difference of Hearers (1625), though the story of the Sower and the Seede recurs in all of these early modern sermons about hearing. Wilkinson reminds his parishioners of 'the Sower' from the 'doctrine' in order to exhort them to be 'worth' their ears if they cannot 'chose but heare' as God's 'elect'. 68 Egerton names the 'Minister' the 'Lord's Sower, or Husbandman, and the people his husbandry, and the time of preaching, the time of sowing' since it is then that we gather

⁶⁴ Crooke, Microcosmographia 587.

⁶⁵ Banister, The Historie of Man 38.

⁶⁶ Pollard, "Vulnerable Ears" 129.

⁶⁷ Crooke, Microcosmographia 585.

⁶⁸ Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 5–6.

God's Word as the 'Immortal Seed'.⁶⁹ The anonymous sermon from 1650 similarly contrasts people with 'ears to hear [...] opened' by 'God's spirit' against those who have 'heart[s] like the high-way side, or like the rockie and thorny ground'.⁷⁰ This is not to suggest, however, that the tale of the sower in these seventeenth-century religious sermons responds to the worrisome implantation of little 'wormes' in the medical texts because the parable distantly predates the discovery of the Eustachian tube and these concerns about infestation. Nevertheless, what the contrariety between these disparate images of aural fertilization reaffirms is the opposite relationship anatomists and ministers had to the open ear: while both sets of authors envisage the ear as a forum for sowing new life within interior spaces, there is again a polar divide between the disturbing, on the one hand, and a welcoming fruitfulness, on the other.

The parable of the sower is predominately an agricultural metaphor in these texts, but it also often carries a secondary valence of sexual impregnation. As Wes Folkerth points out in his reading of this parable, 'when the word is conceived of as seed, the ear is either the vaginal gateway through which the seed must travel on its way to the earth/heart/womb, or it is the womb itself'.71 Brinsley's sermon makes this feminine and nurse-like character of the ear explicit: 'No such incouragement to an Husbandman as when he seeth his tillage to prosper, no such incouragement vnto a nurse, as when shee seeth her childe battle and thriue [...] Whereas on the contrary, a barren soile, and a starueling nursery kill the hearts of both'.⁷² Both Egerton and Harrison describe the preachers as the husbands who, in the traditional male role, plant the fertile 'seed' of the Word into the open ears of their hearers with 'fitting' care for the 'capacitie and present condition of the Auditorie' so as to 'yeeld the best increase'. 73 Using terms strongly evocative of pregnancy, Egerton tells his auditors that the 'Seed' not only 'begets vs' but will 'quicken vs' once it permeates 'our hearts'.74 Wilkinson references the story of the Annunciation, where the

⁶⁹ Egerton, *The Boring of the Eare* 4–5.

⁷⁰ Anonymous, Some Plain Directions for the More Profitable Hearing of the Word 2 and 5.

⁷¹ Folkerth, *Sound of Shakespeare* 47. Reina Green also investigates the early modern ear as an orifice related to the mouth and vagina in "Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery" 53–74. She emphasizes that the open ear was not only connected to ideas of passive female sexuality, but that it was imagined to be an active and 'greedy' site for the expression of desire (53).

⁷² Brinsley, The Preachers Charge 28.

⁷³ Harrison, The Difference of Hearers 15.

⁷⁴ Egerton, *The Boring of the Eare* 33.

Virgin Mary 'heard' the 'straung things' reported by the 'Angels' and, 'laying up the word' within her heart, became miraculously impregnated with Christ through her ear. 75 It would be a mistake to assume, however, that the open ear is always a feminized organ in early modern discourse. On the contrary, several of the sermons make the ear pointedly phallic. calling the ear 'indisposed' to hearing an 'uncircumcised' member. 76 Where this symbolic circumcision reengages the sort of violence perpetuated in the piercing metaphors, since 'uncircumcised' and 'unboared' appear in sequence, it is especially curious that Wilkinson should link 'unprepared harts' to 'uncircumcised eares'.77 The comparison is shocking, first, in its equation of the ear with the male sexual organ since circumcision most commonly refers to the removal of the foreskin, and second, in that this form of physical alteration was strongly and negatively associated with Judaism in the early modern period.⁷⁸ It feels markedly out of place in a Protestant homily. One possible explanation for this choice of words is to reinterpret aural circumcision as a spiritual surgery to remove the excessive fleshiness of the hearing instrument and render it a more suitable organ for divine union.⁷⁹ Indeed, the true point of the metaphors of insemination and impregnation – whether they make the ear feminine, bound to receive the Word of God from the 'husband' minister, or masculine, ready to 'suck' the 'sincere milk' from the motherly pap and 'power of their ministery' – is to reinforce that the open ear is *the* most crucial point of access into the private body, heart, and soul.80 The sexualisation of the ear in these religious sermons reflects the early modern belief that acoustic openness was especially fitted to spiritual, and analogically physical, union.

But even when the reception of the Word into the ear is figured as generative, it can still be presented in tandem with medical language. For

⁷⁵ Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 30.

⁷⁶ Anonymous, Some Plain Directions for the More Profitable Hearing of the Word 3.

⁷⁷ Anonymous, Some Plain Directions for the More Profitable Hearing of the Word $_3$, and Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare $_2$.

⁷⁸ Katz D., "Shylock's Gender: Jewish Male Menstruation in Early Modern England", *Review of English Studies* 50 (1999) 440–462, here 451.

The definition of 'circumcised' dates from the early 1600s and refers primarily to a man 'that has undergone circumcision (allusively used for "Jewish" or "Muslim")' (OED 1.a), but it also has the rarer meaning tied specifically to ears: to spiritually chasten or purify. For this meaning they quote the later usage by Irving in *Last Days* (1828): 'With an open but circumcised ear, they drink in the melody of nature's various song' (OED 1.b.fig).

⁸⁰ Brinsley, The Preachers Charge 28.

example, Harrison equates the 'want of good hearing' with an irresponsible use of prescribed medicine:

the fault is rather in the ground, then in the sower, or in the seede $[\ldots]$ the people heare amisse, and so for want of good hearing, loose the fruite of many good sermons; because the profit of hearing dependeth on the maner of hearing. A medicine fitly prescribed and rightly compounded looseth his vertue in curing the patients disease, if it be not duly administred, and orderly received. 81

Once again the Word becomes not only a seed to 'fructify' the ground, but a drug to purge disease from the centre.⁸² The logical leap that Harrison makes between sowing seeds, hearing sermons, and curing diseases is quite difficult to follow for the twenty-first century reader. This is because the set of associations Harrison draws upon are now completely estranged from our conceptualization of hearing, though we must realize that these metaphors were so customary to early modern listeners that his linkages would seem automatic.

One of the pivotal moves that Harrison makes in this sequence is something repeated across the Protestant sermons on hearing. It is a three-part turn from the exterior environs, to the ear (as a nexus), into the body's interior: the key is to 'heare with thy heart, as well as with thy eares, and then shalt thou be blessed by thy hearing'.83 Where, as we have seen, the metaphors of acoustic permeability used by these preachers manifest the absorption of God's language as a powerful, reproductive, or even violent process of reaching into the hearer, the ministers' continual wordplay around the near-homophones 'ear', 'hear', and 'heart' employs a poetic sound effect – paronomasia – in order to replicate the rapidity of transmission of the Word through the ear into the hearer's spiritual core. The ear/hear/heart cluster occurs at least once in each sermon, but more often numerous times in the prayers and invocations. Wilkinson implores his auditors to ready 'your heartes and eare to heare', the preface to Egerton's sermon calls those who 'heare with their eares, and understand with their hearts' to be 'converted and healed', and so too Brinsley attests that the minister's duty is to 'present Christ vnto the eares and hearts of the hearers'.84 The effect of this paronomasia is nowhere more obvious than

⁸¹ Harrison, The Difference of Hearers A10, Epistle Dedicatorie.

⁸² Harrison, The Difference of Hearers 17.

⁸³ Harrison, The Difference of Hearers 178 (emphasis mine).

⁸⁴ Wilkinson, *A Jewell for the Eare* 34, Crooke "Foreword" A4, and Brinsley *The Preachers Charge* 22–23.

in Wilkinson's entreaty: 'Therefore in the name of God (beloued) let us prepare our eares and h[e]arts that we may first heare, then remember, and last of all lay up the word in our h[e]arts, for this is the right hearing, and he that heareth hath not only eares, but eares to heare'. ⁸⁵ The prominent [ea] assonance resounds with the nine-fold repetition of the 'ear' morpheme in this sentence, creating a strong acoustic impression when spoken aloud. Importantly, these preachers use paronomasia to produce a sound effect that realizes, in the sensing bodies of their parishioners, a felt acoustic experience qua religious experience of God's Word heard aloud. The resonance of the ear/hear/heart punning materializes the message they seek to impart, translating the content of their words into harmonious form.

Brathwaite takes great care to distinguish this sort of internal harmony from the traditional harmony produced by a compatibility of chords. That is, when the preachers express the paronomasia of ear/heart/heart in order to instantiate the absorption of God's Word into the 'centre', they effectively align the body and soul in spiritual attunement.⁸⁶ This is a very different consequence of hearing than that which results from the typical concord of musical instruments. While, as Penelope Gouk has shown, early modern medicine sought to determine the cause of music's passionate responses in the body, these religious authors understood the Word instead as the surest way to sound God's name in the heart.⁸⁷ Most of the Protestant references to music here are disparaging, as for example when Richard Crooke echoes Paul's letter to the Corinthians by noting that 'all our Sermons to the most of men are but as the sounding of Brasse or a tinkling Cimball', or when Harrison laments that the 'Lord's Sabboth' day is 'impiously profained by publike pyping' since the music draws 'people from their dutie': namely, 'to heare diuine seruice'. 88 The affecting power of music is, seemingly, an oppositional force to the words of these pastors. Brathwaite references current medical beliefs in his acknowledgment that delightful music can be a 'preservative' against 'Melancholy', but he counters that such relief can only be temporary at best, whereas the ear's religious edification serves to ring out the 'grounded *melodie* of the heart'.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Wilkinson, A Jewell for the Eare 31.

⁸⁶ Brathwaite, Essaies Vpon the Fiue Senses 6.

⁸⁷ Gouk P., "Raising Spirits and Restoring Souls: Early Modern Medical Explanations for Music's Effects", in Erlmann V. (ed.), *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening, and Modernity* (New York: 2004) 87–106.

⁸⁸ Crooke, "Foreword" A4, and Harrison The Difference of Hearers, dedication.

⁸⁹ Brathwaite, Essaies Vpon the Fiue Senses 7.

He attests that 'externally sounding accents' only 'allay the passion for an instant', while the sounds of 'diuine discourse' conveyed inside the body through the 'ear' leave a lasting 'impression' on the soul. ⁹⁰ It is precisely the sort of active, attentive – and above all – *open* hearing described by the Protestant preachers that Brathwaite believes will ultimately lead to the divine music. 'My eare must be tuned to another note', he reflects, and 'dedicate her inward operation' towards 'the *Melodie of heauen*'. ⁹¹

When Brathwaite urges his 'zealously disposed' audience to attune their ears to the 'melodie' of heaven, when Wilkinson promises that God hangs a 'jewell' in every willing ear, and when Egerton encourages his congregation to value hearing as the 'most needful' of 'all the senses' for 'none are to be compared to the Word of God', each speaker sermonizes the open ear as God's conduit into the soul. 92 This paper has sought to establish the critical role of hearing in early-modern religious experience, to investigate the Protestant championing of the ear as the dominant sense of salvation following the anatomical discovery of the Eustachian tube, and to prove through juxtaposition that English religious authors employed a language borrowed in part from continental medical sources. The conflated rhetoric of science and religion harmonized in these sermons epitomizes how the early-seventeenth-century call for acoustic openness sounded its own interdisciplinary charge.

⁹⁰ Brathwaite, Essaies Vpon the Fiue Senses 7.

⁹¹ Brathwaite, Essaies Vpon the Fiue Senses 26-27.

⁹² Brathwaite, *Essaies Vpon the Fiue Senses* 27; Wilkinson, *A Jewell for the Eare* A1; and Egerton, *The Boring of the Eare*, fol. A8, "To the Reader".

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PART THREE SENSES AND AFFECTS

BEYOND VISION: THE IMPACT OF ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN'S DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

Jennifer R. Hammerschmidt

Rogier van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross* (ca. 1430–1435) presents a display of grief in sharp focus [Fig. 1]. Van der Weyden portrayed the lifeless body of Christ being lowered from the cross, surrounded by mourners who weep at the scene. The impact of the image, 'almost physical in its intensity', was designed to elicit a powerful emotional response. In this article, I suggest that the impact of this altarpiece and the drama it enfolds are enhanced by the image's reference to two other media: sculpture and performance. By engaging its fifteenth-century viewers' prior experiences with media beyond painting, the *Descent* provoked a heightened sensory response. And this heightened sensory response, in turn, intensified viewers' emotional reactions to Van der Weyden's vision of Christ's suffering. Focusing on the audience for whom the *Descent* was originally created, the Greater Crossbowmen's Guild of the city of Louvain, I consider how the image functioned in connection with the guild's annual participation in its procession, the *kermis-ommegang*.² The experiences and the sights of the *ommegang*, I argue, were brought to bear upon the guild members' process of viewing and comprehending the Descent.

Recent discussions of Rogier van der Weyden's work can be grouped into two main bodies of research. The first is the technical investigation of his images, which has yielded a better understanding of Van der Weyden's painting materials and technique.³ The second is the ongoing investigation of Van der Weyden's sphere of influence, particularly through the

¹ De Vos D., Rogier van der Weyden: The Complete Works (Antwerp: 1999) 12.

² See Even E. van, L'Omgang de Louvain: Dissertation historique et archéologique sur le célèbre cortège communal (Leuven: 1863). Van Even parsed the term kermis-ommegang in French, writing: 'Le mot kermesse est composé de deux vocables flamands, kerk, église et mis, messe; il signifie messe de l'église, et par extention messe du Saint de l'église [...] Le mot omgang, qui n'a pas d'équivalent en français, se compose de deux vocales flamands om, autour, et gaen, marcher. Il signifie marcher autour de la ville' (9–10).

³ See Asperen de Boer J.R.J. van – Dijkstra J. et al., "Underdrawing in the Paintings of the Rogier van der Weyden and Master of Flémalle Groups", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 41 (1992) 17–37; and Tucker M., "Rogier van der Weyden's 'Philadelphia Crucifixion'", *The Burlington Magazine* 139 (1997) 676–683.



Fig. 1. Rogier van der Weyden, Descent from the Cross (1430–1435). Oil on panel, 220×262 cm. Madrid, Museo del Prado. Image © Art Resource.

study of his workshop and the afterlives of his images.⁴ These avenues of inquiry are in part the result of the lack of primary evidence on Van der Weyden's life and work, which has made it difficult to definitively constitute the artist's oeuvre.⁵ In addition to these two categories, I would like to suggest a third area of investigation to broaden our understanding of Van der Weyden's images: the study of their reception. This effort builds on methodological approaches that have conceptualized viewer response as a vital component of how images function.⁶ The following exploration

⁴ Noteworthy recent examples include Campbell L. – Stock J. van der, *Rogier van der Weyden 1400/1464: Master of Passions* (Leuven: 2009); Köllermann A., "Models of Appropriation: The Reception of the Art of Rogier van der Weyden in Germany", in Borchert T.-H. (ed.), *Van Eyck to Dürer: Early Netherlandish Painting and Central Europe 1430–1530*, exh. cat., Groeningemuseum, Bruges (Lannoo: 2010) 68–81; and Powell A., "The Errant Image: Rogier van der Weyden's 'Descent from the Cross' and its Copies", *Art History* 29 (2006) 540–562.

⁵ See for example Kemperdick S. – Sander J., *Der Meister von Flémalle und Rogier van der Weyden* (Frankfurt – Berlin: 2008); and De Vos D., *Rogier van der Weyden*.

⁶ See Freedberg D., *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: 1989), Jauss H., *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Minneapolis: 1982), and, for a

of the sensory impact of Van der Weyden's *Descent* investigates the altarpiece from the perspective of the community of viewers for whom it was created: the Greater Crossbowmen's Guild of Louvain.⁷

1. The Descent in Focus

The focal point of Van der Weyden's *Descent* is the pale and lifeless body of Christ being lowered from the cross. His face and form are echoed by the figure of his mother Mary, who faints alongside him. The striking visual parallel between these two figures emphasizes the intensity of Mary's grief; more than a metaphor for her son's pain, Mary's suffering is rendered here with a depth and acuity on par with Christ's. The pictorial setting of the *Descent* is vital to the work's dramatic impact upon the viewer. While the rocky green earth at the foot of the image alludes to the crucifixion's original setting at Calvary, the shallow, boxlike gold background of the image denies a broader temporal setting. The ten figures in the scene appear cramped in a space too small to contain them; in the foreground, Mary and Christ press forward in space as if straining the surface of the image. Otto von Simson described the impact of these figures' confinement as a removal of the drama from the context of its historical place and time, ultimately 'eliminating the distinction between onlookers and those actively occupied with taking Christ's body from the Cross'.8 The impact of this elision – the inclusion of the viewer in the scene being viewed – heightens the immediacy of the action taking place.

There is a sculptural quality to the painted forms of the figures in the *Descent*. The folds of John the Evangelist's robe, floating upward from his sleeve as if blown by the wind, have a smooth and solid appearance more akin to stone or wood than to fabric. This feature is also visible in the garments of the man descending the ladder at the top of the image. The wrinkled folds of his clothes form sharp, hard edges that enhance the

case study specific to late medieval Flemish painting, see Miller J., "Miraculous Childbirth and the Portinari Altarpiece", *The Art Bulletin* 77 (1995) 249–261.

⁷ Here I have isolated the guild members as a viewing audience for two reasons. The first is that the guild members constitute a specific and communal audience for a case study of the altarpiece's reception. The second is their shared experience of seeing the altarpiece and the *ommegang* on the same day, creating an association between the two which may not have been as potent for other viewers of the image.

⁸ Simson O. von, "Compassio and Co-redemptio in Roger van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross*", *The Art Bulletin* 35 (1953) 9–16, here 10.

three-dimensional appearance of the work, giving volume to this figure positioned behind the cross and adding a sense of depth to the scene. In Bilder des Corpus Christi, Heike Schlie observes that most altarpieces found in northern European churches were carved retables. Viewers were accustomed to looking into these enclosed shrines that Van der Weyden, familiar with this experience of seeing, evoked in painting. Schlie writes that the image oscillates not only in the genre it suggests, between the carved altarpiece and pure painting, but also in its simultaneous evocation of painting and sculpture. When painting foregrounds sculpture as an art form, it also references its own medium.9 Van der Weyden's demonstration of sculptural forms summons viewers' prior experiences of images. In particular, it engages the viewing skills and expectations of an audience familiar with carved altarpieces. In echoing the plasticity of sculpture, Van der Weyden's figures acquire volume in space, making them appear more lifelike, more tactile, and more tangible to the senses. Form serves content as the appearance of these figures becomes a means to heighten the image's dramatic impact.

If the sculptural quality of *The Descent* evokes viewers' prior experience of images – and of carved altarpieces in particular – what is the prior experience to which its theatrical quality speaks? Which viewing practices and expectations did Van der Weyden's image engage, and what purpose did such an engagement serve for the image's original audience? The plasticity of Van der Weyden's figures, combined with their vivid displays of emotion, lend to the *Descent* the appearance of being an image in motion. Viewers are not called upon to observe a snapshot in time; they are witnesses to an event as it unfolds. In the article, "Posing Intentions in Renaissance Painting", Alfred Acres calls attention to a figure typically overlooked in analyses of the *Descent*: the man farthest to the viewer's right, whose name is unknown to us.¹⁰ We see this man in the act of extending

⁹ Schlie H., *Bilder des Corpus Christi: Sakramentaler Realismus von Jan van Eyck bis Hieronymus Bosch* (Berlin: 2002) 326. The quotation in German reads as follows: 'Aber das Bild oszilliert nicht nur in der Suggestion seiner Gattung zwischen Schreinkasten und reinem Gemälde, sondern auch in der Wahl der Mittel zur Demonstration von malerischer Plastik und plastischer Malerei. "Wenn die Malerei uns die Skulptur als Kunstgattung vorzeigt, so handelt sie auch von sich selber"' (the English above is my translation). See Schlie's discussion of the *Descent* on pages 324–328. The quotation as used by Schlie, an apropos compliment to her statement, is taken from Belting H. – Kruse C., *Die Erfindung des Gemäldes: Das erste Jahrhundert der niederländischen Malerei* (Munich: 1994) 95.

¹⁰ Acres A., "Posing Intentions in Renaissance Painting", in Chapuis J. (ed.), *Invention: Northern Renaissance Studies in Honor of Molly Faries* (Turnhout: 2008) 3–19.

his hand between Nicodemus and Mary Magdalene. Acres interprets this gesture as 'a move to encourage Mary Magdalene to step backward so that the body can pass in this direction, toward the tomb. Pressed forth and tilted up, the hand presents its back to her in a way that anticipates a gentle space-clearing motion'. Acres argues that this seemingly small gesture is significant since, 'in a manner like no major painting before it, the Prado *Descent* contrived an eccentric moment that looks equally backward to the Crucifixion and forward toward the Entombment'. The space-clearing motion Acres describes is a gesture that signifies movement through time, indicating a future outside the physical parameters of the image but within the broader Passion narrative.

From the weight of the bodies of Mary and Christ to the sweeping emphasis of the man's gesture, from the tears on the faces of the mourners that would seem to fall to the twisting of their expressions in grief, the illusion of movement is present in this image in abundance. The appearance of this image as a work in motion compels viewers to imagine the scene continuing beyond what is actually depicted, precisely as Acres has suggested. As much as this work focuses on the agony of a single moment, so too does it guide viewers to picture the next moment in the narrative of Christ's suffering. The dramatic impact of the *Descent* is contingent upon this engagement with movement not only within the image, but also through the narrative of which it forms a part. Here motion is vehicle for emotion, and a means through which viewers attain a sharper feeling of compassion for Christ's sacrifice.

Acres's interpretation of gesture calls attention to the ways in which the *Descent* appears to be an image in motion. In the *Descent*, there is more than one way in which motion and the ensuing emergence of narrative can be read. For example, the weight of Christ's body and the parallel figure of Mary pull the eye from the centre of the painting down to the right. The line created by Christ's outstretched arm leads the eye down to Mary; the line created by her outstretched arm poignantly leads the viewer to the skull at the base of John's feet. The trajectory of this diagonal is not one of passage from Christ's death to his entombment; it is his passage from life into death. The rightward pull of these central figures need not stand in contradiction to Acres's perception of the leftward movement of Christ's body through the image. Instead, this prior pull can be

¹¹ Acres, "Posing Intentions" 7.

understood as the part of this unusual moment that looks back to Christ's crucifixion. The potential for motion to pull the viewer back or forward in time, from Christ's death to his burial, emphasizes the way in which the *Descent* occupies a uniquely interstitial moment in the process of Christ's Passion.

There is a dramatic quality to the painted forms of the figures in the *Descent*, and the appearance of movement is one of several key features that create this impact. In imagining the framework of events surrounding the drama on display, the altarpiece appears less as a moment arrested in time and more as a scene in progress. Otto von Simson cites the monumental quality of the altarpiece as another trait emphasizing this impression: '[...] the narrow stage forces the actors into a relief-like pattern that reveals the innermost feelings of each one of them. Their emotions overwhelm us'. You Simson notes that the image appears crowded, the figures pressed into a space too small to contain them. At 220 \times 262 centimetres, the altarpiece showcases nearly life-sized figures and remains one of Van der Weyden's largest works, comparable in its monumental quality to his *Philadelphia Crucifixion* (1464) [Fig. 2].

The effect of this crowded appearance makes the figures seem to strain the surface of the image, pushing past the two-dimensionality of the painted panel. This effect is particularly poignant in the figure of Christ, whose body appears to come forward as if to press into the viewers' space. An enhanced sense of depth is created through the portrayal of two figures behind Christ: the man descending the ladder, who supports Christ's elbow, and Joseph of Arimathea, who stands between the two as he holds Christ's torso. But, as Von Simson has observed, the space of the image remains shallow. The boxlike setting delimits the depth of the space occupied by the figures, while the gold background serves to bring the back of the image forward in space, further emphasizing the shallow quality of the space these figures occupy. As a consequence, the three-dimensional volume created by the three figures in the centre of the image does not deepen the picture plane; it extends the plane outward into the viewers' space. The impact of this effect, especially in combination with their monumental size, imparts the perception of these figures' presence both in space and in time as it imbues the action taking place with a sense of immediacy.

¹² Von Simson, "Compassio and Co-redemptio" 9.



Fig. 2. Rogier van der Weyden, *Crucifixion* (ca. 1460). Oil on panel, left panel 180.3×93.8 cm, right panel 180.3×92.6 cm. Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image © Philadelphia Museum of Art / Art Resource.

2. The Descent in Louvain

In addition to its focus on the body of Christ being lowered from the cross, the *Descent* calls extraordinary attention to the suffering of Mary, Christ's mother. The theme of Mary's suffering was of special prominence at the altarpiece's original destination, the high altar of the chapel of the Crossbowmen's Guild at the Church of Our Lady. The chapel was built by this guild in 1364 and, already in 1365, 'the guild placed a picture of the Virgin of Sorrow within the church, probably upon the main altar which was dedicated to her'. ¹³ In the fourteenth

¹³ Blum S., Early Netherlandish Triptychs: A Study in Patronage (Berkeley: 1969) 53. See also Torfs J.A., Geschiedenis van Leuven van den vroegsten tijd tot op heden (Leuven: 1899) 90.

century, the church also housed a Pietà statue that was polychromed and life-sized.¹⁴ The participation of the Crossbowmen's Guild in the civic life of Louvain was bound not only to the practice and display of their military skills, but to the public expression of their participation in the religious life of the city and, in particular, of their devotion to the Virgin Mary.¹⁵

Upon their induction into the guild, members had to swear to the duke, the city, and their guild that they would serve the city as good Christians. The guild brothers were obligated to participate, in full armour, in two religious processions each year: the procession of the Holy Sacrament, and the procession of Our Lady. 16 The latter was an elaborate procession, begun in Louvain in the year 895, in which the guild marched in uniform with representatives from the entire city, ranging from tradesmen like butchers and carpenters to magistrates and university professors. During the fifteenth century, horses drew wagons bearing large scenes that portrayed the life of the Virgin Mary from the Annunciation to her assumption into heaven.¹⁷ In the early fifteenth century, the *ommegang* increasingly presented the dramas of the Virgin's life through a series of plays and tableaux vivants. Held on the feast day of the guild's patron saint, the Virgin of Sorrows, the *ommegang* provided the guild with the opportunity to display its civic status as well as a forum for the ritual enactment of its devotion to the Virgin.¹⁸

As in the *Descent*, the intertwining of Christ and Mary's suffering was on display in the city's *ommegang*. Over the course of the 1430s, there was an increased interest in the themes of Christ's suffering and death. By 1435, Christ's life story was played out in the *ommegang*, during which a

¹⁴ See Powell, "The Errant Image" 543.

¹⁵ See Arnade P., Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent (Ithaca, NY: 1996) 51–63.

¹⁶ Torfs, Geschiedenis van Leuven 91–92.

¹⁷ See Even E. van, *Geschiedenis van Leuven geschreven in de jaren 1593 en 1594 door Willem Boonen* (Leuven: 1880) 245–256, for a more in-depth description of the procession. The original work, known as the *Liber Boonen* (1593–1594, Louvain City Archives/Museum Mertens-Van der Kelen), is extant and includes noteworthy coloured illustrations of the *ommegang*: see for example the wagon representing the Tree of Jesse ('Den Waegen Representerende Die Roede van Jesse', 456) and the wagon representing the Annunciation ('Den Waeghen representerende Die Bootschap', 458). On the *Liber Boonen* see Twycross M., "The Liber Boonen of the Leuven Ommegang", *Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies* 22 (1984) 93–96.

¹⁸ Trowbridge M., "The Stadschilder and the Serment: Rogier van der Weyden's 'Deposition' and the Crossbowmen of Louvain", *Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies* 23 (1999) 5–28, here 9.

living person, tied to the cross, portrayed the crucified Christ on a wagon. Records in the Louvain City Archives show payments from 1435–1440 to Henric Hondertjaer 'vanden crucifixe omme te vueren' - to lead the wagon bearing the crucifix.¹⁹ A record from 1439-1440 also names Gaert de Maeck, 'die aent crucifix hinck' – who hung from the crucifix [Fig. 3].²⁰ In 1437, three new wagons appeared in the *ommegang*, portraying scenes from the Last Supper, the Garden of Olives, and Calvary.²¹ The presence of a live actor playing the role of the crucified Christ – a man who appears to have literally hung from the crucifix during the procession – speaks to an animated and dramatic portrayal of the crucifixion. Like Van der Weyden's Descent, this was not a static scene but an event in motion, happening for viewers who acted not as spectators but as witnesses to the event. Van der Weyden's depiction of the deposition - an unusual subject for an altarpiece during this period, despite the large number of crucifixion scenes portrayed on altarpieces – must have played a role for guild members in this way of imagining Christ's suffering. For those who were accustomed to seeing this altarpiece in their chapel must have been unusually attuned to the moment of the deposition in the crucifixion narrative. In turn, the powerful staging of the crucifixion during the ommegang provided a mental image that guild members could take back to their experience of viewing the Descent. Trowbridge notes that guild

¹⁹ See Verlinden G., *Ommegang en toneel te Leuven in de late Middeleeuwen*, PhD dissertation (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven: 1982). The original quotation reads: 'Het lijdensverhaal van Christus werd in de ommegang van 1436 uitgebeeld. Een levend personage, gebonden aan een kruis, werd op een wagen meegevoerd en beeldde alzo de gekruisigde Christus uit' (72). See also Schodts J., *Het toneelleven te Leuven in de 15de en 16de eeuw*, PhD dissertation (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven: 1941), and Van Vlierden K., "De Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-ommegang van Leuven", in *Het Laatgotische Beeldsnijcentrum Leuven* (Leuven: 1979) 348–349. Vol. 5060 (1435–1436) records a payment (the earliest I found) to Henric Hondertjaer (to lead the wagon bearing the crucifix): see S.A.L. 5060, fol. 17r.

²⁰ Leuven Stadsarchief, *Stadsrekening*, 4986–5147: *Uitgaven in verband met ommegang en toneel* (1345/46–1523/24), S.A.L. 5060, fol. 16 (1435–1436), S.A.L. 5062, fol. 12 (1436–1437), S.A.L. 5066, fol. 14 (1438–1439), and S.A.L. 5068, fol. 23 (1439–1440). Mention of Hondertjaer continues into the 1440s, but the description of his role changes. See for example S.A.L. 5069, fol. 22, where it states: 'Henric Hondertjaer van ons Vrouw bodschap te vuren in de vorige processie'. My thanks are due to Thérèse de Hemptinne of Ghent University for her paleographical guidance.

²¹ See Trowbridge, who raises the possibility that members of the Crossbowmen's guild were witnesses to a deposition scene during the *ommegang*. Trowbridge argues that, 'while the records of the *ommegang* from 1436 and 1437 only mention the cross and the sepulchre, it is likely that a deposition also appeared as a part of the processional sequence. The crucified Christ was played by a live actor; it is only logical that this same actor would have been lowered before being deposited in the sepulchre'. Trowbridge, "The Stadschilder" 24.

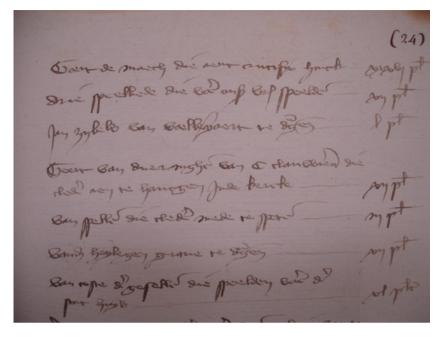


Fig. 3. Stadsrekening, 4986–5147: Uitgaven in verband met ommegang en toneel (1439–1440). Stadsarchief Leuven (S.A.L. 5068). Photo: Author. Detail, upper portion of manuscript page.

members were required to attend mass in their chapel 'on the feast day of their patron, the Virgin of Sorrows, the day of the *kermis-ommegang*'.²² Guild members would thus have viewed the *Descent* and witnessed the *ommegang*'s staging of the crucifixion within a single day.

Although I argue here that the *Descent* engaged its viewers' experience of the *ommegang*, I would like to suggest that the purpose of that engagement was not mimetic, intending to reproduce a specific tableau vivant or a moment from the processional sequence. Likewise, the *ommegang*'s crucifixion sequences after 1435 do not necessarily use the *Descent* as an antecedent source. Instead, my point is to suggest that it is in the minds of the viewers themselves that such a crossing of various visual experiences would take place. This is to argue that Van der Weyden's *Descent* resonated so powerfully for viewers precisely because of the absence of this particular moment from previous fifteenth-century visual represen-

²² Trowbridge, "Stadschilder" 9.

tations of Christ's Passion. The image was present first and foremost in the guild members' minds and need not have been physically re-enacted before them in order for this presence to be active.

In the process of imagining a conceptual framework from within which guild members comprehended Van der Weyden's Descent, it is important to consider the array of different religious practices (for example, devotional meditation, the hearing of Passion sermons, the celebration of the Mass, and the participation in the *ommegang*) that influenced how they viewed the altarpiece. Relevant to the impact of the ommegang on the altarpiece (and, conversely, of the altarpiece on the ommegang) is what Beth Williamson describes as the temporal context of the work, 'Even if the physical or spatial context of an altarpiece appears to be fairly clear and unshifting, the temporal context within which an altarpiece was viewed could be at least as important, if not more important. At different times of the day, and at different times of the year, a community's or an individual's reception of an altarpiece might vary'. 23 While Van der Weyden's vision of Christ in the *Descent* would have had a particular impact on the day of the ommegang, the altarpiece can be understood as one component in a matrix of media that shaped guild members' responses to visions of Christ's suffering. The evocation of physical and emotional sensation was related to multiple forms of its communication; in the words of Susan Karant-Nunn, '[i]nner and outer forms of culture cannot exist apart from one another. Feeling and expression are inseparable'.24

Martin Stevens has used the term intertextuality to describe the relationship between medieval drama and art, writing that 'I see painting and performance as interactive texts: one is in essence the image of the other, and, in a sense, the interpretation of each work is enriched by reference to the other'. Fifteenth-century devotional practices, Passion sermons, and the performance of the Mass combined to evoke the Passion in the minds of believers. Devotional practices encouraged meditation on the Passion as well as the use of inner images as means to identify with Christ

 $^{^{23}}$ Williamson B., "Altarpieces, Liturgy, and Devotion", $Speculum\ 79\ (2004)\ 341-406,$ here 379.

²⁴ Karant-Nunn S., *The Reformation of Feeling: Shaping the Religious Emotions in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford: 2010) 9. See also ibid., 159–188 for a deeper analysis of early modern depictions of Mary's suffering at the foot of the cross.

²⁵ Stevens M., "The Intertextuality of Late Medieval Art and Drama", *New Literary History* 22 (1991) 331.

by empathizing with his suffering.²⁶ The contemplation of the Passion of Christ, aided by images, assisted believers in connecting more deeply with his pain and thus achieving a heightened sense of compassion for both Mary and Christ.²⁷ Devotional practices functioned in tandem with the liturgy, connecting the celebration of the mass to more individualized or internalized expressions of piety.²⁸ When viewed during the celebration of the Eucharist, the *Descent* would have offered its viewers a juxtaposition of Christ's body with the host as lifted by the priest at the moment of transubstantiation.²⁹ The *Descent* visualized a parallel between the lowering of the host and the deposition of Christ's body from the cross.

Passion sermons during the fifteenth century can be characterized in part by an increased interest in Mary's suffering at the base of the cross. This includes the dissemination of Passion narratives, which looked to texts like the *Meditationes vitae Christi* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, that described Mary's emotional pain in response to Christ's physical suffering:³⁰ 'Over and over again, these texts insistently invite us to imagine what it would have been like for Mary to have seen her son tortured and to conform ourselves to her mental condition in order to grieve along with her; at the same time they recount the full extent of

 $^{^{26}}$ See Ringbom S., "Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions: Notes on the Place of Art in Late Medieval Private Piety", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 73 (1969) 159–170, and Harbison C., "Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish Painting", *Simiolus* 15 (1985) 87–118.

²⁷ See the discussion of the concept of the *Andachtsbild* in relation to the analysis of altarpieces in Gerth J., *Wirklichkeit und Wahrnehmung: Hans Memlings Turiner Passion und die Bildgruppe der Passionspanoramen* (Berlin: 2010) 93–99. See also Noll T., "Zu Begriff, Gestalt und Funktion des Andachtsbildes im späten Mittelalter", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 67 (2004) 297–328.

²⁸ Reindert Falkenburg has observed that the realms of private devotion and ecclesiastical liturgy were less separated than many studies on devotional imagery have acknowledged; he asserts that private prayer and devotion were bound to both the sacrament of the Eucharist and the celebration of the Mass. See Falkenburg R., "Hans Memling's Van Nieuwenhove Diptych: The Place of Prayer in Early Netherlandish Devotional Painting", in Hand J.O. – Spronk R., *Essays in Context: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych* (New Haven: 2006) 92–109. See also Thomas Lentes's discussion of 'the liturgization of privacy' in Lentes T., "'As Far as the Eye Can See ...': Rituals of Gazing in the Late Middle Ages", in Hamburger J.F. – Bouché A.-M. (eds.), *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: 2006) 360–373.

Middle Ages (Princeton: 2006) 360–373.

²⁹ On this subject see Barasch M., "'Elevatio': The Depiction of a Ritual Gesture", Artibus et Historiae 24 (2003) 43–56.

 $^{^{30}}$ See Ellington D., "Impassioned Mother or Passive Icon: The Virgin's Role in Late Medieval and Early Modern Passion Sermons", Renaissance Quarterly 48 (1995) 227–261 for a broader discussion of the portrayal of Mary's suffering in Passion sermons of this period.

Mary's suffering in vivid and concrete detail'.³¹ There is a parallel between these descriptive accounts of Mary's pain and Van der Weyden's careful rendering of her emotional expression. His detailed evocation of her suffering provides an ekphrastic complement to spoken and written Passion narratives of this period. The image evoked Mary's suffering as a path for viewers to experience her pain more acutely, thereby achieving a deeper, concomitant compassion for Christ. Amy Powell has observed that the forms of Mary and Christ's bodies, in echoing each other so closely, oppose 'the reality effect to which the rest of the painting gives rise'.³² She suggests that 'the parallel between the Virgin and Christ establishes a different mode of representation altogether – one that is explicitly coded as symbolic'.³³ The parallel structure of Mary and Christ's bodies thereby provides a strong cue for viewers to link Mary and Christ's suffering, and not to perceive one apart from the other.

The verisimilitude of Van der Weyden's image, noticeable throughout the image from the careful rendering of facial expressions to the artist's meticulous attention to detail, demands the close and prolonged attention of its viewers. Inserting this concept into the terms of a more contemporary viewer, De Vos writes that '[t]he effect must have been even more overwhelming for people in the late Middle Ages, who were not accustomed as we are to the surging proximity, dizzying expanses and verisimilitude of filmic images'.34 The intensity of Van der Weyden's portrayal of emotion in the Descent can, in part, be interpreted as a tool to heighten the multi-sensory impact of the work and thus to elicit from viewers a more profound compassionate response to the scene. Viewers are made to imagine, for example, not just the emotional impact of tears but the sound of weeping, the physical pain of grief, and the weight of Christ's dead body. As tears stream down the faces of John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalene, viewers are compelled to identify with their suffering, and the physical memory of their own weeping – from the feeling of a tear travelling down the cheek to its salty taste – heightens their ability

 $^{^{31}}$ Bestul T., Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society (Philadelphia: 1996) 120.

³² Powell A., "A Point 'Ceaselessly Pushed Back': The Origin of Early Netherlandish Painting", *The Art Bulletin* (2006) 720.

³³ Powell, "A Point 'Ceaselessly Pushed Back'" 721.

³⁴ De Vos, "Rogier van der Weyden" 12. In terms of media, it is interesting to consider that the viewership's point of reference for the quality of verisimilitude in painting was constituted not only by other images, but also by staged scenes – including, but not limited to, those performed in the *ommegang*.

to relate to the mourners' pain. Viewers of the *Descent* were encouraged to feel their way through the experience of devotion to Christ's suffering at Calvary. The wounds in Christ's side, hands, and feet suggest the tactility of his body as blood flows in long lines down his skin. Through this sensory immediacy, Van der Weyden has evoked the sense of touch through sight.

As a result of the rendering of pain for the purpose of sensory evocation, the process of viewing the altarpiece becomes a physical experience as well as an emotional one: the physical perception of the work serves to intensify its emotional impact. In addition, the striking quality of the Descent, enhanced by the verisimilitude described above, may have also presented its viewers with the means to better recollect the image. That is to say, the painting's compositional and stylistic qualities, in making a strong impression on its viewers, could have functioned in part to better enable those viewers to recall the work's appearance when they were not present before it. This is not to suggest that viewers attempted, as part of their meditative and devotional practices, to recall the image in complete or exact detail. Instead, the *Descent* aided its viewers in their more profound task of meditating on the complex of events that comprised Christ's Passion, the larger narrative of which Van der Weyden's image forms a part. Peter Parshall locates the power of late-medieval Passion images not merely in their subject matter, but also in their style. He observes that '[...] it is possible to consider the dictates of artificial memory as prescription not just for the content of certain kinds of images but also as a prescription for style. For example, the *Ad Herennium* insists that memorable images must be not only striking but also clear and precise, well spaced and brightly lit'.35

The long impact of the *Ad Herennium* in the late medieval period can be understood as one of a complex of experiences that shaped viewers' mnemonic engagement with the *Descent*. By aiding the development of inner images for use in meditation on the Passion, the *Descent* integrated viewers' experiences of different media into their perception of and

 $^{^{35}}$ Parshall P., "The Art of Memory and the Passion", *The Art Bulletin* 81 (1999) 456–472, here 468. Parshall goes on to observe that '[a]lthough fifteenth-century representations of the Passion are as often densely claustrophobic as they are orderly and well-spaced, their exacting record of detail, the investment in saturated local color and crystalline enamel finish are characteristics that seem to strive for maximum lucidity and legibility' (468). His observation can be applied well to the ${\it Descent},$ in which the densely crowded space of the image clearly conveys the connection between Mary and Christ.

engagement with the altarpiece.³⁶ For its fifteenth-century viewers, the *Descent* played a role in the interrelationship between material images, images of the mind, and staged depictions of the Passion.³⁷ At the same time, the altarpiece's interaction with other material forms like sculpture enhanced its multimedia impact on viewers. In connecting the guild viewers' vision of Christ's suffering to their own sensory knowledge; in emphasizing the communal and performative nature of their shared practices; and in extending their vision of Christ and Mary's sorrow to their lived experience of civic engagement, Van der Weyden's vision of the deposition was interwoven in guild members' communal and ritual life.

Through his emphasis on the role of emotional affect and of its bodily sensations within meditations on the suffering of Mary and on the Passion, Van der Weyden placed the perception of the physical world and of emotional contact with the divine at the centre of the performance of compassion. I propose that Van der Weyden's altarpiece functioned in part as a lens through which guild members comprehended the crucifixion and other tableaux vivants of the kermis-ommegang. Conversely, these experiences of the ommegang shaped how guild members comprehended the altarpiece. This perspective on the altarpiece connects not only individual episodes of Christ's suffering and Mary's sorrows that guild members would see on their feast day, whether in their chapel or during the *ommegang*. It also connects the fabric of their chapel – not just the objects, but the viewing practices that took place within it – to the Crossbowmen's performance and participation in the ommegang. In this context, Van der Weyden's Descent is not just an object of interpretation, it is an instrument for interpretation: an image through which the ommegang was seen and understood.

Our knowledge of Van der Weyden as an artist may forever be limited by the lack of surviving documentation on his life and work. In the absence of commission records and biographical data, and in the ongoing

³⁶ On the impact of the *Ad Herennium* and other rhetorical treatises on the ways in which audiences understood images in this period, see Göttler C., *Last Things: Art and the Religious Imagination in the Age of Reform*, Proteus: Studies in Early Modern Identity Formation 2 (Turnhout: 2010) 31–69. See also Carruthers M., *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (Cambridge: 1998).

³⁷ For an exploration of this idea in relation to other types of late medieval images, see Göttler C., "'Figura passionis': Abraham und Isaak im Stundenbuch der Maria von Burgund", in Heinen U. – Steiger J. (eds.), *Isaaks Opferung in den Konfessionen und Medien der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin: 2006) 153–184. See also Bynum C.W., "Seeing and Seeing Beyond: The Mass of St. Gregory in the Fifteenth Century", in Hamburger – Bouché (eds.), *The Mind's Eye* 208–240.

debate over which pieces definitively constitute the artist's oeuvre, Van der Weyden emerges in no small part as an art-historical construction. The technical investigation of images attributed to Van der Weyden by broad art-historical consensus, in combination with the study of his influence and workshop practices, advance the aim of better understanding the artist. However, I would like to suggest here that the functions of these images can be better understood and described by examining the viewing practices of their audiences. While analyzing those audiences is no less problematic than analyzing the artist, it nonetheless opens new pathways for re-examining an important group of images.³⁸

³⁸ For a broader and more theoretical discussion of the limitations of art-historical constructions of contexts for objects, see Bal M. – Bryson N., "Semiotics and Art History", *The Art Bulletin* 73 (1991) 174–208.

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'A CUI NE FECE DONO': ART, EXCHANGE, AND SENSORY ENGAGEMENT IN ANTHONY VAN DYCK'S *LAMENTATION* FOR THE ANTWERP BEGUINES

Sarah Joan Moran

For the nuns of the Beguinage', Giovanni Bellori wrote in his *vita* of Anthony van Dyck, 'he painted the Lamentation, with the dead Redeemer in his mother's lap, the Magdalene kneeling and kissing the wound on his hand, and St. John. He made the Magdalene's face a portrait of his own sister, a nun, to whom he gave the painting'.¹ The work to which Bellori refers, a monumental *Lamentation*, or *Pietà*, now on display in Antwerp's Museum of Fine Arts [Fig. 1], presents the viewer with four figures in a landscape setting: the dead Christ, stretched out over a low rock ledge, his mother Mary, cradling her son's head and shoulders, the Magdalene, who kneels and kisses the wound on Christ's left hand, and John the Evangelist, who looks in on the scene from the right.²

Although well-known and repeatedly copied in the seventeenth century,³ the *Lamentation* has been somewhat neglected in the literature

¹ Bellori Giovanni Pietro, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti moderni*, ed. E. Borea, 2 vols. (Turin: 1976), vol. I, 276, as translated by A. Sedgwick Wohl in *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects* (New York: 2005) 217: 'Per le monache del Begginaggio dipinse la Pietà col Redentore morto nel grembo della Madre, Madalena genuflessa, che gli bacia la piaga della mano, e San Giovanni. Ritrasse nel volto della Santa la sua propria sorella monaca, a cui ne fece dono. [...] Alla medesima sua sorella donna Susanna Van Dyck dedicò egli stesso il disegno intagliato dell'altra tavola in Santo Agostino, che ancora è molto rara per vivezza di colore e per l'invenzione' ('For the nuns of the Beguinage he painted the Lamentation, with the dead Redeemer in his mother's lap, the Magdalene kneeling and kissing the wound on his hand, and St. John. He made the Magdalene's face a portrait of his own sister, a nun, to whom he gave the painting. [...] To his same sister Lady Susanna van Dyck, he himself dedicated the engraving of another altarpiece, in St. Augustine's, which is also most rare, for the lifelikeness of the color and for the invention').

² On the painting, see Vlieghe H., Anton van Dijck: Zijn religieus werk in Vlaams bezit (Ostkamp: 1999) 44; Baisier C., Antoon van Dyck anders bekeken: Over 'registers en contrefeytsels, tronies en copyen' in Antwerpse kerken en kloosters (Antwerp: 1999) 71; and Barnes S.J. – Miller O. – Poorter N. De – Vey H. (eds.), Van Dyck: A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings (New Haven: 2004) cat. no. III.30.

³ There is a painted copy in the Prado whose authorship has been contested, but which is likely by Van Dyck himself (see Larsen E., *The Paintings of Anthony van Dyck*, 2 vols. (Freren: 1988), vol. I, no. 719), as well as anonymous, smaller seventeenth-century copies



Fig. 1. Anthony van Dyck, Lamentation (ca. 1628). Oil on canvas, 313.5 \times 225.1 cm. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten. Image © Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten.

on Anthony van Dyck's work. Bellori's statement that the painting was made for the Beguinage of Antwerp, where it was recorded by Mensaert as being on the high altar of the church in the 1760s,4 has never been in doubt. But surprisingly, his other claims – that the work was 'given' to the artist's sister, whom Bellori names later in the passage as Susanna van Dyck, and that it contains her portrait – have not been critically addressed.⁵ This is, I believe, due to both historical and historiographical factors. First, there is a lack of documentary and material evidence concerning the *Lamentation*: no contract or record of payment is preserved, and the church in which it was installed was destroyed under the French at the end of the eighteenth century. 6 Second, the *Lamentation* has no known patron, and third, art historians have neglected sufficiently to consider the work's primary intended viewers, the Beguines of St. Catherine's, and the critical role they played in Antwerp's spiritual economy. In addition, Bellori's claim that the painting was a 'gift' to Anthony van Dyck's sister seems far-fetched simply because the work's large size suggests it was intended not for a private home but for an altar, which is of course where it is first recorded. And finally, no other contemporary sources support Bellori's linkage of the painting to Susanna van Dyck.

Yet we do have, I believe, a wealth of information that can be used to contextualize the Beguinage *Lamentation*, and in the following pages I attempt to fill in this gap in Van Dyck scholarship by analysing the work in terms of the historical moment in which it was produced.

in the church of the Beguinage in Lier, the Beguinage Museum at Turnhout, and in a private collection (an inexact copy, sold by Christie's on 14 April 2011). A number of printed copies were also made over the course of the seventeenth century; the earliest, which appears to have been incised after the Prado version, is discussed below. On the prints see Depauw C. – Luijten G., *Antoine Van Dyck et l'estampe*, exh. cat., Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp (Antwerp: 1999) 258–262.

⁴ Mensaert Guillaume Pierre, Le peintre amateur et curieux, ou Description générale des tableaux des plus habiles maîtres, qui font l'ornement des eglises, couvents, abbayes, prieurés & cabinets particuliers dans l'étendue des Pays-Bas autrichiens (Brussels, P. de Bast: 1763) 212–213.

⁵ Depauw and Luijten did take up the issue of the portrait, but they misread both Bellori and the dedicatory text on Pontius's print, stating that it was another sister, Anna van Dyck, who was a Beguine and that it was she who was supposedly portrayed in the face of the Magdalene. See Depauw – Luijten, *Antoine Van Dyck*, 258 and 262.

⁶ Aside from an inscription on the reproductive print of the work noted above, Bellori's text is the earliest known reference to the painting. After the destruction of the Beguine church the work was removed to Paris; it was returned to Antwerp after the fall of Napoleon and has since remained in the possession of the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp. On the Low Countries under the French Republic, see Devleeshouwer R., "De Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens het Franse bewind 1794–1814", in *Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 15 vols. (Haarlem: 1978–1982), vol. XI, 187–207.

This moment, I argue, witnessed a unique intersection of family relationships, community identity, and Counter-Reformation teachings that figured artistic images as important components in a highly emotive devotional practice. When we look at the *Lamentation* from these angles, Bellori's statements not only begin to make sense but also emerge as a credible account of events. More importantly, I seek to use Bellori's claims (true or not) as a vantage point from which further to develop the idea of the gift itself, looking at how intricate processes of spiritual and material exchange, mediated through the viewer's sensory imagination, determined the status of artworks in the seventeenth-century Southern Netherlands.

1. Brothers and Sisters in Counter-Reformation Antwerp

The Beguinage Lamentation is most often situated within the context of Anthony's relationships with his family members, and it is thus with a brief overview of his family that I begin. Anthony's parents, Maria Cuypers and Frans (or Franchois) van Dyck, married in 1587 and had twelve known children, three of whom died in infancy. The nine survivors were Catharina (born October 18, 1590), Maria (b. October 30, 1592), Frans II (b. October 29, 1594), Cornelia (b. January 4, 1598), Anthony (b. March 22, 1599), Susanna (b. September 15, 1600), Anna (b. December 9, 1601), Theodoor (also known as Dierik, Thierry, and later Wal(t)mannus, b. April 7, 1605), and finally Isabella (sometimes known as Elisabeth, b. October 2, 1606).⁷ The couple ran a prosperous trade in luxury textile goods, and in the spring of 1607 they moved from a house on Antwerp's Grote Markt to a large and well-furnished house called 'De Stadt van Ghendt' on the Korte Nieuwstraat. But after Maria Cuypers's death just a few weeks later, Frans van Dyck seems to have proved himself either inept or markedly unlucky in handling the family's financial affairs.8 At the centre of these problems was the trusteeship

⁷ Much of what we know about the Van Dyck family's early history comes from archival research performed by Katlijne van der Stighelen. For the information in this and the following paragraph, see Stighelen K. van der, "Van Dyck's First Antwerp Period: Prologue to a Baroque Life Story", in Brown C. – Vlieghe H. (eds.), *Van Dyck*, 1599–1641, exh. cat., Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp (London: 1999) 35–47; eadem, "Young Anthony: Archival Discoveries Relating to Van Dyck's Early Career", in Barnes S.J. – Wheelock A.K. (eds.), *Van Dyck* 350 (Hanover, NH – Washington, DC: 1994) 17–46; and eadem, *Van Dyck* (Tielt: 1998) particularly 10–22.

⁸ This statement is based on the findings of Katlijne van der Stighelen, who has brought to light multiple instances of Frans I being sued or having complaints lodged against him

of the inheritance due to the nine underage Van Dyck siblings from the joint estate of their parents as well as that of their maternal grandmother. Frans's two sons-in-law, Adriaen Diericx (who had married Catherine in 1510) and Lancelot Lancelots (who married Maria in 1615) joined him as co-guardians, but there was trouble with their management as well. Anthony complained to the city aldermen twice, in 1616 and 1617, petitioning for the restoration of the inheritance owed himself and his siblings, which he claimed was being 'used up' by their guardians. On May 30 of 1620 De Stadt van Ghendt was auctioned for 40,000 guilders, and Frans I died two years later in the care of the Antwerp Dominican nuns. 10

In the meantime, Frans II had married and fallen into his own financial problems, while Anthony was quickly establishing himself as one of Antwerp's most talented artists. He had trained as a painter since 1609, first with Hendrik van Balen and then with Peter Paul Rubens, and had been named a master by the guild of St. Luke in 1618. Some months after his childhood home was sold, Anthony went to work at the English court, returning to Antwerp several months later and then leaving in 1621 for Italy, where he would work and travel for the next six years. Anthony's eldest unmarried sister, Cornelia, had professed at the Beguinage of St. Catherine on August 28, 1618, and all the rest of the Van Dyck siblings likewise went on to join religious communities. Theodoor became a canon at the Norbertine abbey of St. Michael's, the oldest religious house in Antwerp and one of the wealthiest institutions in the Low Countries, in 1625. Anna van Dyck went first to a community of Augustinian

for failure to pay his debts during this time. He was apparently forced to sell off his assets at least once before De Stadt van Ghendt was sold. See Stighelen, "Young Anthony" 24–26.

⁹ Stighelen, "Young Anthony", Document 10.

¹⁰ Stighelen, Van Dyck 11.

¹¹ On the painter's early artistic work in Antwerp, first trip to England, and time in Italy, see *Stighelen*, "Young Anthony", and Liedtke W.A., "Anthony van Dyck", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 42 (1984) 4–48, at 6–18.

¹² Anonymus, Het Leven van de seer edele doorluchtigste en H. Begga, Hertoginne van Brabant, Stigteresse der Begijnen. Met een begrip van de levens der Salige, Godtvruchtige en Lof-Weerdige Beggijntjes der vermaerde en hoogg-gepresen Beggijnhoven (Antwerp, widow of Petrus Jacobs: 1712) 72.

¹³ Stighelen, "Van Dyck's First Antwerp Period" 37. On the abbey, see Eyken K.J. Vander, De Sint-Michielsabdij Antwerpen: Iconografische tentoonstelling 1124–1830 (Antwerp: 1988); Goris J.M. – Persoons E. – Haeghen H. van der – Helsen L., Een kaartboek van de Sint-Michielsabdij Antwerpen, 1640–1793 (Brussels: 2003); and Van den Nieuwenhuizen J., "Abbaye de Saint-Michel à Anvers", in Berlière U. (ed.), Monasticon 8 (Bruges: 1993) 195–262. At some later point Theodoor left St. Michael's to work as a priest in Minderhout, about forty kilometers northeast of Antwerp.

canonesses in Waasmunster, 31 kilometres south-southwest of Antwerp, but in 1626 she returned to her home city to profess at another Augustinian house called 'Mariëndaal' or the 'Facons' convent. Finally, Susanna and Isabella joined Cornelia at St. Catherine's, professing as Beguines on May 26, 1626, and August 27, 1628, respectively.

I bring up the Van Dyck family's financial troubles and later career choices in order to make a point concerning the socio-economic status of the Beguinage of St. Catherine and the viewership that Anthony's *Lamentation* would have had there. Several authors have inferred that Cornelia, Susanna and Isabella professed at St. Catherine's because their father's financial ruin left them either too dishonoured or too poor to marry. This is based on three widely held but deeply problematic assumptions: first, that early modern women generally saw marriage as preferable to religious celibacy; second, that women needed a dowry to marry in the Low Countries; and third, that the Court Beguinages accepted poor women into their communities. The first of these assumptions is contested, he while the second two are simply false. Thus although the outcome of Anthony's

¹⁴ Baisier, *Antoon Van Dyck* 11. On the Waasmunster community, see Brouwers L., *De abdij Roosenberg te Waasmunster*, 1238–1971 (Mechelen: 1982). On the Facons convent, see De Moor G., "De relatie tussen Mechelen en het Antwerpse klooster Facons", *Koninklijke Kring voor Oudheidkunde, Letteren en Kunst van Mechelen* 41 (2010) 23–25; Scheepsma W., *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries: The 'Modern Devotion', the Canonesses of Windesheim and Their Writings* (Rochester, N.Y.: 2004) 171–189; and Persoons E., "Prieuré de Mariandaal à Anvers", in Berlière U. (ed.), *Monasticon* 8 (Bruges: 1993) 563–580.

¹⁵ Anon., *Het Leven* 72. Each of the sisters would have in fact entered the community a year earlier than these dates to complete their novice period; this is according to a set of rules written for the Beguinage in 1600. See Olyslager W.A., 750 jaar begijnen te Antwerpen (Antwerp: 1990) 103.

¹⁶ Among the many texts arguing that early modern women actively avoided marriage and the economic and legal disenfranchisement that it entailed for them are Hardwick J., "Seeking Separations: Gender, Marriages, and Household Economies in Early Modern France", French Historical Studies 21 (1998) 157–180; Evangelisti S., "Wives, Widows, and Brides of Christ: Marriage and the Convent in the Historiography of Early Modern Italy", The Historical Journal 43 (2000) 233–247; and Kowaleski M., "Singlewomen in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: The Demographic Perspective", in Bennett J.M. – Froide A.M. (eds.), Singlewomen in the European Past 1250–1800 (Philadelphia: 1999) 38–81.

¹⁷ On Low Countries marriage and inheritance law, see Gilissen J., *Le statut de la femme dans l'ancien droit belge*, Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire comparative des institutions 12 (Brussels: 1962); and Aert L. van, "Tussen norm en praktijk: Een terreinverkenning over het juridische statuut van vrouwen in het 16de-eeuwse Antwerpen", *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 2 (2005) 22–42. Concerning admission to the Beguinage, it was explicitly stated in St. Catherine's rules (see Olyslager, *750 jaar begijnen* 103), as it was in the rules of all Court Beguinages, that potential members had to prove that they were debt-free and had enough in savings, income from work, or annual returns on investments (*renten*) to support themselves before they could be accepted. On

pleas to the Antwerp city aldermen is unknown, and while it is unclear whether the money from the sale of 'De Stadt van Ghendt' was enough to cover Frans van Dyck's debts, his daughters' religious professions indicate that they must have recovered at least part of their inheritance and were financially independent.

The fact that Cornelia, Anna, Theodoor, Susanna, Isabella and, for most of his life, Anthony, all remained single seems to have fostered a strength in the bonds among them. A deep trust in and reliance on each other are reflected in various actions taken over their lifetimes, such as their filing lawsuits on each others' behalf, or Susanna's 1650 foundation of a perpetual memorial mass for the souls of Cornelia, Anthony, and their parents in a chapel that Theodoor had paid to restore. Moreover, Anthony, Susanna, and Isabella repeatedly made each other beneficiaries of their wills, the earliest examples of which are discussed below. But the strongest bond, at least as far as we can garner from the limited historical sources, was probably that between Anthony and Susanna. It was Susanna that Anthony trusted to care for his eldest daughter, Marie Teresa, and Susanna whom he asked to serve as an intermediary in the transfer of a large portion of his estate to this same daughter, whose bastard status precluded inheriting from her father directly. Susanna not only made

the rules and financial workings of the Court Beguinages, see Moran S.J., Unconventual Women: Religion, Politics, and Image in the Court Beguinages of the Low Countries, 1585–1713, Ph.D. Dissertation (Brown University: 2010) Chapter 2; Quintijn R.-M., Normen en normering van het begijnenleven: Vergelijkende studie van de begijnregels in de Nederlanden van de XIIIe tot de XVIIIe eeuw, Lic. Phil. Thesis (University of Ghent: 1984); and Elsen K., Het Groot-Begijnhof te Leuven rond 1700: Sociale aspecten van het leven als begijn, Lic. Phil. Thesis (Catholic University of Leuven: 1986).

¹⁸ Stighelen, "Young Anthony" 25-26.

¹⁹ See Huet L., "Een barok kleinood op een Kempense akker: De kapel van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Zeven Weeën in Minderhout", in Grieten S. – Braeken J. (eds.), *Vreemd gebouwd: Westerse en niet-Westerse elementen in onze architectuur* (Turnhout: 2002) 137–152.

²⁰ Excepting Anthony's English will (cited below), these documents are reproduced (some excerpted) in Duverger E., *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, 14 vols. (Brussels: 1984–2009), inventory numbers 628, 629, 1004, 2542, and 2578.

²¹ Anthony van Dyck's last will, written in London on December 4, 1641, is reproduced in Carpenter W.H., *Pictorial Notices, Consisting of a Memoir of Sir Anthony Van Dyck, with a Descriptive Catalogue of the Etchings Executed by Him, and a Variety of Interesting Particulars Relating to Other Artists Patronized by Charles I (London: 1844) 75–77. In this document Anthony states that the majority of his Antwerp property is already under the stewardship of Susanna, and that after his death she may dispose of it as she wishes, excepting that a yearly allowance of 250 guldens be paid to Isabella, and also that Susanna be "bound to mayntayne and keepe [his] young Daughter by name Maria Teresa Van Dyke". Since Marie Teresa was old enough to marry one Gabriël Essers that same year, she must have been conceived before Anthony's trip to Italy and may have been raised in the Beguinage by*

good on her promise to do so but also maintained a close relationship with Justina, Anthony's younger daughter with his English wife, until the Beguine's death in 1664.²²

The Antwerp in which the Van Dyck siblings grew up was in the midst of a massive religious revival. Catholic institutions throughout the Low Countries had suffered greatly during the upheavals of the 1560s through the 1580s, which were characterized by waves of iconoclasm, warfare, and periods of Calvinist rule. After the restoration of Catholic hegemony in the Southern Netherlands in 1585 many of the old institutions regrouped and began rebuilding their communities, but it was only after the Twelve Years' Truce was declared in 1609 that religious life truly began to flourish again. Antwerp became the Northern European centre of the Counter-Reformation,²³ and while the reformers worked to strengthen existing Catholic institutions and to create new ones, Antwerp artists were busied with the decoration of new and renovated churches, chapels, and public spaces with images that would communicate and spread the true faith.²⁴ Among the Counter-Reformation's most important goals was to reassert the Virgin's power as spiritual intercessor (a doctrine that had been vehemently attacked by Protestants), and the key defenders of this tenet were the Jesuits, who founded Marian sodalities in Antwerp and throughout the region and were deeply involved in educating the laity.²⁵ The Beguinage

her aunts. Anthony died five days after writing the London will and was (as he instructed in it) buried in St. Paul's Cathedral. On the execution of his will and dispersal of his goods, see Brown C. – Ramsay N., "Van Dyck's Collection: Some New Documents", *The Burlington Magazine* 132 (1990) 704–709. In Susanna's last will of 1664 (Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen* no. 2578), she states that Anthony had given her 15,090 guldens for Marie Teresa and that she has already given her niece 7800 guldens on the event of her marriage, and she orders that the remainder be paid out on her own death.

²² See Baisier, Antoon Van Dyck 13–15.

²³ See Thijs A.K.L., *Van Geuzenstad tot Katholiek Bolwerk: Antwerpen en de contrareformatie* (Antwerp: 1990); Marnef G., "Protestant Conversions in an Age of Catholic Reformation: The Case of Sixteenth-Century Antwerp", in Gelderblom A.-J. – Jong J.L. de – Vaeck M. van (eds.), *The Low Countries as a Crossroads of Religious Beliefs* (Leiden – Boston: 2004) 33–48.

²⁴ On the revitalization of the religious institutions, see Marinus M.J., *De Contrareformatie te Antwerpen* (1585–1676) (Brussels: 1995). For an overview of the uses of art in this process, see Knipping J.B., *De iconografie van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 2 vols. (Nieuwkoop: 1939–1940); and Vlieghe H., *Flemish Art and Architecture*, 1585–1700 (New Haven: 1998).

²⁵ See Muller J.M., "Jesuit Uses of Art in the Province of Flanders", in O'Malley J.W. – Bailey G.A. – Harris S.J. – Kennedy T.F. (eds.), *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773* (Toronto – Buffalo – London: 2006) 113–156; Smith J.C., *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton, NJ: 2002); and Goethem H. van (ed.), *Antwerpen en de Jezuïeten, 1562–2002* (Antwerp: 2002).

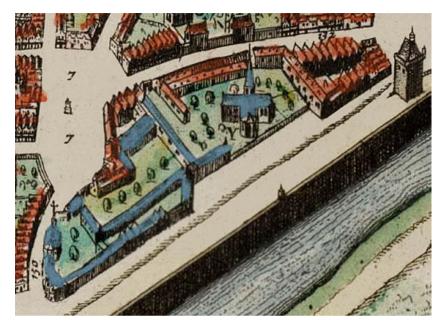


Fig. 2. Anon., *Antverpia*, from Johannes Blaeu's *Novum ac Magnum Theatrum Urbium Belgicae Regiae* [...] (Amsterdam, Johannes Blaeu: 1649) 34. Engraving. Detail showing the Beguinage of St. Catherine; their church is at center.

of St. Catherine [Fig. 2] also took part in this revitalization process, and it is to this institution, and its particular social, economic, and religious character during the Van Dycks' time, that we now turn.

2. St. Catherine's Beguinage

St. Catherine's was one of a unique group of communities known as *Begijnhoven*, or Court Beguinages, which were a fundamental component of urban life in the Southern Netherlands from the thirteenth through the nineteenth centuries. The women who lived there were called *Begijnen* or Beguines,²⁶ but unlike the medieval beguine mystics (who have received more attention from scholars), these women lived in highly

²⁶ The term *beguine* itself has a long history and has been used to refer to many different types of religious women; for the sake of clarity, I use the capitalized form to refer to women who lived in the Court Beguinages and the lower-case form to refer to those who did not.

organized, wealthy communities, and they held an official position within the Church. They were not *monache*, or nuns, as Bellori mistakenly called them, but rather occupied a liminal status between the regular orders and the laity: like nuns the Beguines made vows of chastity and obedience, but they rejected the traditional monastic vow of poverty and did not follow a monastic rule; they were thus not a religious order. In addition, whereas nuns, especially after reforms instituted by the Council of Trent in 1563, were required to keep some form of monastic enclosure, Beguines were not.²⁷ Their gates stood open during daylight hours and they were free to receive visitors or go out into the world. Finally, the Court Beguinages were extraordinarily large, with populations ranging from about a hundred to well over a thousand, and by the seventeenth century most had held independent parish status for over three hundred years.²⁸ Female monasteries, by contrast, rarely had more than a few dozen members.²⁹ St. Catherine's in Antwerp was in fact notably small for a Beguinage in such a large city: in 1628 it housed 204 Beguines, and in 1664 that number was 273;30 at the same time the 'Great Beguinages' of Mechelen, Brussels, and Ghent each counted 800 or more Beguine residents.³¹ The smaller population size at St. Catherine's was perhaps due to a relative selectivity in accepting members; the institution had a reputation for catering to the elite, and its elected 'mistresses', or superiors, were often women with noble blood and impressive personal wealth. In the Van Dycks' time, for instance, prominent merchants (such as Joan Nollet, Giovanni Zanoli and Dierik de Moy), city officials (like Pierre le Meseurer and Jacob de Schott), and several of the region's more important noblemen (including Brussels mayor Lancelot van Ursel) all had sisters, aunts, nieces and/or cousins at the Antwerp Beguinage.³²

²⁷ On the institution of Tridentine enclosure rules in the Low Countries, see Harline C., "Actives and Contemplatives: The Female Religious of the Low Countries Before and After Trent", *The Catholic Historical Review* 81 (1995) 541–567.

 $^{^{28}}$ Moran, *Unconventual Women*, Chapter 1. Parochial status meant the Beguines had the right to hire their own priests, fulfill all of their religious obligations in their own churches, and bury their own dead.

²⁹ Harline, "Actives and Contemplatives" 547; Simons W., *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries*, 1200–1565 (Philadelphia: 2001) 111.

³⁰ These numbers are calculated using the profession and death dates in the Antwerp Beguinage's *Obituarium* (Antwerp Municipal Archive, KK-862).

³¹ For Beguinage population statistics, see Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, Appendices; and Majérus P., *Ces femmes qu'on dit béguines* [...] *Guide des béguinages de Belgique. Bibliographie et sources d'archives*, Introduction bibliographique à l'histoire des couvents belges antérieure à 1796 9 (Brussels: 1997).

³² Olyslager, 750 jaar begijnen 130–134. The Beguinage archives also contain numerous indications of high-status individuals within the community; for example, a small but sig-

Although their unenclosed and difficult-to-regulate lifestyle was a continual source of anxiety for the ecclesiastical authorities, the Low Countries Court Beguinages never faced serious persecution and proved to be remarkably resilient and stable throughout the medieval and early modern periods.³³ One of the major reasons for this was the crucial role that the Beguines played in religious life in the Low Countries: they constituted a huge spiritual labour force in the ever-pressing project of praying for the souls of the dead, which Catholics believed had to be cleansed of sin through suffering in purgatory before they could ascend to heaven.³⁴ The foundation of memorial masses was the most effective way to help these souls, and the Beguines attracted so many foundations that it was common for them to hold five, six, or even ten such masses a day.35 As the Counter-Reformation gained momentum in the Southern Netherlands in the early seventeenth century, the Beguines and their supporters anticipated the increased scrutiny they would face in light of Tridentine strictures on women, and they embarked on a public relations program that emphasized their virtue, orthodoxy, and closeness to God, and the concomitant power of their prayers. The texts published in this context

nificant proportion of the Beguines listed in the *Obituarium* came from noble families: in 1628, 13, or 6.3%, were entitled to be called *juffrouw*, roughly equivalent to 'gentlewoman' in English, while in 1664, 15, or 5.5%, could say the same. There also exists in the Antwerp Diocesan Archive (X. Begijnhof, 82) a *Tittelboek* in which each Beguine's passive income from *renten* was listed. Unfortunately any entries from before 1650 have been lost, but in the second half of the seventeenth century we see incomes ranging from 37 guldens per year (probably barely enough to live on) to several thousand.

³³ Although Clement V condemned the beguine movement in 1311, his successor, John XXII, exonerated the 'virtuous' Low Countries Court Beguines and Clement VI reaffirmed this papal support in 1343. See Ziegler J.E., "The *Curtis* Beguinages in the Southern Low Countries and Art Patronage: Interpretation and Historiography", *Bulletin de l'Institute historique belge de Rome* 57 (1987) 31–70; and Moran, *Unconventual Women*, Chapter 1.

³⁴ See Göttler C., *Die Kunst des Fegefeuers nach der Reformation: Kirchliche Schenkungen, Ablaß und Almosen in Antwerpen und Bologna um 1600*, Berliner Schriften zur Kunst 7 (Mainz: 1996); Eire C.M.N., *From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art & Craft of Dying in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Cambridge: 1995); Tingle E., "Purgatory and the Counter-Reformation: Perpetual Chantries in Southern Brittany, 1480–1720", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60 (2009) 464–489; and Goff J. Le, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago: 1984). The particular association of semi-religious women with this type of prayer has been noted in Goodich M. "The Contours of Female Piety in Later Medieval Hagiography", *Church History* 50 (1981) 20–32; and Newman B., *From Virile Woman to Woman Christ: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: 1995) Chapter 4.

³⁵ This is evident from the *jaargetijd* and *anniversarie* lists preserved in the Beguinage archives. See, for example, manuscripts in the Diest Municipal Archive (Begijnhof, 28, 29 and 30) and the Antwerp Diocesan Archive (X. Begijnhof, 239).

declared that their prayers could, in special cases, release of souls from purgatory and even effect miracles. 36

When Cornelia van Dyck professed in 1618, St. Catherine's had recently commenced the reconstruction of their church, replacing a medium-sized sixteenth-century structure with a grand, three-aisled house of worship that would measure eighteen metres wide by forty-two metres long [Fig. 3].³⁷ Archival records from this period reveal that the project was conducted in a manner typical of the Court Beguinages, with numerous individuals and institutions playing roles.³⁸ Funds for the building were raised in part by soliciting loans, in this case amounting to 4840 guldens, over half of which was granted interest-free. More money came from donations, primarily from within the Beguinage (a total of 7280 guldens from Beguines, their priest and their chaplain), but outside benefactors also offered sums totalling over 1000 guldens. Notable among the latter donors were Nicolas Rockox, mayor of Antwerp; the Antwerp Bishop Johannes Malderus; Gaspar Jan and Melchior Moretus of the city's famous printing house; the finance ministers of Brussels; and a number of Catholic sympathizers in the Protestant Northern Netherlands.39

The decoration of the new structure was also a piecemeal affair, with some of the work paid for from the raised funds, and other elements donated by individuals. An illustrative example of this variety can be seen in the works executed by the sculptor Hans van Mildert for the project. Van Mildert was paid for making the carved wooden panelling for the church's interior from the building funds, while the Beguinage's almonry paid him for the sculptures of St. John and St. Catherine that were installed on either side of the high altar. One of the Beguinage 'mistresses' personally paid him to construct the church door, and for the façade, Beguine

³⁶ I make this argument in my dissertation and forthcoming book of the same title, *Unconventual Women*. For one Beguine's claims that her prayers released souls from purgatory, see Schrieck Anna van – Rossoms Anna – Mennens Isabella, *Cort Begryp van het Godtvruchtigh ende Deughtsaem Leven van Sr Anna Van Schrieck Beggyntie op het Beggyn-Hof van Antwerpen, ghestorven den 30. Meert 1688 (Antwerp, Petrus Jouret: 1698) 53–54, 93.*

³⁷ Olyslager, *750 jaar begijnen* 37, 111–112.

³⁸ Ibid., and for comparison, Mees M. (ed.), *De begijnhofkerk van Lier: Bouwgeschiedenis en inventaris van het kunstpatrimonium van de Sint-Margaretakerk* (Bruges: 1999); Eycken M. van der (ed.), *Kunstschatten uit het Diestse begijnhof* (Diest: 1988); Coekelberghs D. (ed.), *L'église Saint-Jean-Baptiste au Béguinage à Bruxelles et son mobilier* (Brussels: 1981); and Lauwerys J., "Het begijnhof van Hoogstraten", *Jaarboek Koninklijke Hoogstratense Oudheidkundige Kring* 42–44 (1974–1976).

³⁹ Olyslager, 750 jaar begijnen 111–112.

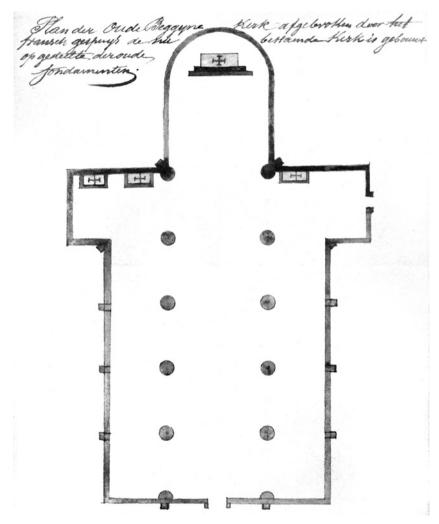


Fig. 3. Anon., Plan of the Antwerp Beguinage church (nineteenth century). Pen and watercolour on paper, 15.2×20.3 cm. Antwerp, Felixarchief, Fonds Begijnhof (KK-682). Image © Felixarchief.

Catherine Delhove paid the artist to sculpt a figure of St. Catherine. Beguine Magdalena van Reysegem did the same for a St. John the Evangelist, and Van Mildert himself donated an image of the Virgin that was likely placed prominently in the centre. Each individual act of participation would have been considered a 'good work', not only benefiting the Beguines but also adding to the glory of God and to the revitalization of the Catholic faith in the city. With so many people willing to contribute, the new church was finished in under two years and Bishop Malderus dedicated the structure on February 26, 1619. The visual character of its interior continued to develop over the course of the century as new artworks were installed, as is evident from both the surviving church account books and the testaments of numerous Beguines who willed pictures, statues, and other ornaments to the church. These objects thus became part of their church's interior visual fabric, and they were integrated into a Catholic liturgical practice with a long history of explicit engagement with the senses, where sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing were activated as a means of accessing a higher, supra-sensory spiritual experience.⁴⁰

3. What's in a Gift? An Artist's Memorial in a Beguinage Church

Anthony van Dyck returned to Antwerp from Italy in the fall of 1627,⁴¹ perhaps prompted by news that his sister Cornelia was ill; she died on November 15, 1627.⁴² In the following months the painter must have

⁴⁰ The deliberate activation of the senses was discussed by Church leaders from Augustine to William Durandus to Ignatius of Loyola. See Chidester D., "Symbolism and the Senses in Saint Augustine", *Religion* 14 (1984) 31–51; Faupel-Drevs K., *Vom rechten Gebrauch der Bilder im liturgischen Raum: Mittelalterliche Funktionsbestimmungen bildender Kunst im Rationale divinorum officiorum des Durandus von Mende (1230/1–1296)* (Leiden: 2000); Astell A.W., *Eating Beauty: The Eucharist and the Spiritual Arts of the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: 2006); Largier N., "Inner Senses – Outer Senses: The Practice of Emotions in Medieval Mysticism", in *Codierungen von Emotionen im Mittelalter*, ed. C.S. Jaeger (Berlin: 2003); Melion W.S., *The Meditative Art: Studies in the Northern Devotional Print, 1550–1625* (Philadelphia: 2009); and Verdon T.G., "Art and Liturgy", *Interpretation* 61 (2007) 359–374. Counter-Reformation theories of sensory activation are further discussed below.

⁴¹ Liedtke, "Anthony van Dyck" 30.

⁴² There is some disagreement in the sources over the date of Cornelia's death. Katlijne van der Stighelen gives Cornelia's date of death as 18 September, and a number of scholars have cited her death as the reason for Anthony's return home in October. However, sources both reproducing and based on Cornelia's (now lost) gravestone in the church, as well as the Beguinage *Obituarium* in the Municipal Archive of Antwerp, give a date of 15 November. See Stighelen, *Van Dyck* 22; Anonymus, *Het Leven* 433.

engaged in serious discussions about the future with his sisters Susanna and Isabella, who were then respectively a Beguine and a novice at St. Catherine's. This is clear from the fact that in March of 1628, Anthony, Isabella, and Susanna all filed wills that named each other as primary beneficiaries and that can be seen as complementary documents.⁴³ These wills are the most concrete evidence of Anthony's involvement with the Antwerp Beguinage and are, along with stylistic evidence, the basis on which the production of the *Lamentation* has variously been dated to between 1627 and ca. 1630.

The dating can, I believe, be set with some certainty to 1628 by pointing to a detail whose full significance has not previously been understood. This is the painter's choice of burial place in his testament, which names 'his sepulchre (my emphasis) in the choir of the Beguinage church.'44 The language here, which is quite clear, does not merely express Anthony's 'wish' to be buried there, as some authors have characterized it, but rather indicates that when Anthony filed his will on March 6, 1628 he already possessed the rights to the tomb. And this, in turn, was an unusual achievement that would have been possible only after some negotiation, for the community of the dead inside a Beguinage church was extremely exclusive. Normally only members of the institution – the Beguines themselves, as well as the priests and chaplains who served them – could be buried there. When exceptions were made for outsiders, it was almost always for a member of the clergy or for a Beguine's female relative; rarely did a layman attain the same privilege. Moreover, in early-modern Catholic

⁴³ Duverger, Antwerpse kunstinventarissen, nos. 628 and 629.

^{44 &#}x27;[...] ende syn doot lichaem der gewijder aerde kisende syne sepulture in de choor van de kercke van den bagynhove alhier': Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen* no. 628. The sepulcher mentioned here was a different grave than that owned jointly by Anthony's sisters, which was possibly purchased on the event of Cornelia's death, as it is mentioned in Isabella's and Susanna's 1628 and subsequent wills. It is never mentioned as being in the choir, a detail that was customarily included because of the status it accorded. From Susanna's will of 1664: '[...] kiesende haere begraeffenisse inde kercke van voors begijnhovie, ter plaetse daer haere susters Cornelia & Isabella van Dijck begravien liggen [...]' ('[...] choosing to be buried in the church of the Beguinage here [i.e. in Antwerp], in the place where her sisters Cornelia and Isabella van Dyck lay buried [...]'). Antwerp Municipal Archive, Notaris A. Rademakers, 997 (1663–1666), fols. 1v–2r.

⁴⁵ In Génard's transcription of epitaphs from the Beguinage church (ranging from the late-sixteenth to the late-eighteenth century), only two laymen appear; one is Roderigo Nuñez Ximenes, member of a wealthy merchant family, and the other is Jacobus van den Berghe, buried in the church with his wife Maria Antheunissen in the late seventeenth century. See Génard P., *Antwerpen: Kloosters*, Verzameling graf- en gedenk-schriften van de provincie Antwerpen, vol. V (Antwerp: 1873) 425, 433. The latter couple might have been the parents of the Beguine Joanna vanden Bergh, who according to the *Obituarium* died

Europe, to be buried in the choir of *any* major church, where one's body would be close to the masses performed on the high altar, was a mark of prestige typically reserved for those at the top of the social order and those who made major contributions to the church's coffers. The financial records for the church at St. Catherine's Beguinage are largely missing for the years 1628 to 1630, so it is quite possible that Anthony van Dyck made such a donation of which no traces remain. But given the information that we do have, I believe the most likely scenario is that the *Lamentation* itself constituted the currency of exchange.

Such a transaction – a painter offering a painting to be placed on an altar in return for a tomb near that altar – was unusual, but it did have precedent. One example that Anthony van Dyck would almost certainly have known was that of Titian, who had reportedly contracted with the monks of the church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in Venice to paint an altarpiece for their *Altare del Crocifisso* in exchange for his being buried before it.⁴⁶ The picture in question, also a *Lamentation* or *Pietà* [Fig. 4], was unfinished at the time of the painter's death and was never installed in its intended position, but if it had been it would have stood as a kind of visual epitaph for Titian, a final testimony to his artistic identity, achievements, and personal piety during his time on earth. Anthony van Dyck, whose deep engagement with Titian as an artistic model and source of inspiration is well known,⁴⁷ possibly had this story in mind when he approached the administrators of St. Catherine's about securing his own tomb in their church.⁴⁸ In any case, the circumstantial evidence points

in 1668. My own research in Beguine churches throughout the Low Countries and in the photographic archives of Belgium's Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (www.kikirpa.be) confirms that such cases were unusual.

⁴⁶ See Rosand D., "Titian in the Frari", *The Art Bulletin* 53 (1971) 196–213. The first mention we have of this transaction comes from Ridolfi's 1641 *Vita* of Titian (see Ridolfi C., *Life of Titian*, ed. and trans. J.C. Bondanella (University Park, PA: 1996)), but the artist was indeed buried in front of the altar in question and the story (even if untrue) must have been circulating before Ridolfi published his text.

⁴⁷ Work on Anthony van Dyck's relationship to Titian includes Wood J., "Van Dyck's 'Cabinet de Titien': The Contents and Dispersal of His Collection", *The Burlington Magazine* 132 (1990) 680–695; and Roland M., "Van Dyck's 'Holy Family with Partridges': Catholic and Classical Imagery at the English Court", *Artibus et Historiae* 15 (1994) 121–133.

⁴⁸ Hendrik van Balen, Van Dyck's first teacher, might have made a similar agreement with the administrators of the parish church of St. James, but if this is the case it is unclear whether it would have occurred before or after 1628. Van Balen died in 1632 and was buried in the nave of the church near the chapel of the St. Anthony guild for which he had painted an altarpiece. The artist had also joined the guild and had made donations to the church in the 1620s. For Van Balen's epitaph see Werche B., *Hendrick van Balen (1575–1632): Ein Antwerpener Kabinettbildmaler der Rubenszeit (Turnhout: 2004) 20*, and on the dona-



Fig. 4. Titian, completed by Jacopo Palma il Giovane, Lamentation (unfinished in 1576). Oil on canvas, 378×347 cm. Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia. Image © Gallerie dell'Accademia.

strongly to an exchange of painting for grave, and if such an agreement was made then it must have been reached *before* Anthony's will was filed on March 6 of 1628. We can thus reasonably assume that the *Lamentation* was completed close to the same time, perhaps as early as the last months of 1627, and probably no later than the end of 1628.

What, then, of Bellori's claim that the *Lamentation* was 'given' to Susanna van Dyck? The answer might be teased out by considering how

tions to the church see Jeffrey Muller's forthcoming book on the decoration of St. James's. My thanks to Professor Muller for sharing this information.

the concept of giving combined with that of artistic invention for Anthony van Dyck. We know that the painter often used artworks to memorialize relationships and demonstrate personal affection; this can be seen in the numerous 'friendship portraits' that he executed throughout his working life, as well as in the gifts of pictures he made to friends and family members.⁴⁹ During Anthony's second Antwerp period of 1627 to 1635 this interest took a new form as he actively began to publish prints made after his paintings;⁵⁰ a number of these contain dedicatory texts, and while many of these name illustrious patrons (and potential patrons), a few of the dedications are made to Anthony's siblings. To his brother Theodoor Anthony dedicated a print of a Holy Family, of which Theodoor owned the original, and Paulus Pontius's engraved reproduction of the Beguinage Lamentation was dedicated to Anna van Dyck [Fig. 5].⁵¹ A third work, an engraving made by Pieter de Jode after Anthony's St. Augustine in Ecstasy [Fig. 6],⁵² the altarpiece made for the Antwerp Augustinians in 1628 that established his position as a leading painter of religious works,⁵³ was dedicated to Susanna with the following lines:

To his dearest sister, Lady Susanna van Dyck, Beguine of Antwerp, an honourable woman, highly praised for her virtues, Anthony van Dyck gave and dedicated [this work]. 54

⁴⁹ Moir A., *Anthony van Dyck* (New York: 1994) 23, 44–45, 66; and Filipczak Z.Z., "Reflections on Motifs in Van Dyck's Portraits", in Wheelock A.K. – Barnes S.J. – Held J.S. (eds.), *Van Dyck: Paintings*, exh. cat., National Gallery, Washington (Washington, DC: 1990) 59–68, particularly 62–65. On the concept of friendship in the seventeenth century, see Kooijmans L., *Vriendschap en de kunst van het overleven in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: 1997), Miller P.N. "Friendship and Conversation in Seventeenth-Century Venice", *The Journal of Modern History* 73 (2001) 1–31, and Swett K.W., "The Account between Us': Honor, Reciprocity and Companionship in Male Friendship in the Later Seventeenth Century", *Albion* 31 (1999) 1–30. On the social significance of 'the gift' in the period, see Thoen I., *Strategic Affection? Gift Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Amsterdam: 2007).

^{50'} See Luijten G., "La gravure, gage de notoriété: Estampes par et d'après Van Dyck jusqu'à 1641", in Depauw – Luijten, *Antoine Van Dyck et l'estampe* 218–233.

⁵¹ Baisier, *Antoon Van Dyck* 11; and Depauw – Luijten, *Antoine Van Dyck* 258–262, cat. no. 35b. The print in fact appears to be after the nearly identical Prado version of the painting. Its dedicatory inscription reads: 'Religiosae Dominae ANNAE VAN DYCK Monasterij Facontini, Passionis Dominicae hoc theatridium Germanae suae ponebat Antonius van Dyck'.

⁵² Depauw – Luijten, *Antoine Van Dyck* 267–273, cat. no. 37c.

⁵³ Brown C. – Vlieghe H., *Van Dyck*, *1599–1641*, cat. no. 51.

^{54 &#}x27;Honestae ac virtutum laude conspicuae Dominae Dominae Susanna van Dyck Beginasii Antverpiensis alumnae sorori charissimae dedit dedicavitque'.



Fig. 5. Paulus Pontius after Anthony van Dyck, *Lamentation* (ca. 1628). Engraving, 42.7 \times 35.2 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet (inv. no. RP-P-OB-33.218). Image © Rijksmuseum.



Fig. 6. Pieter de Jode II after Anthony van Dyck, *St. Augustine in Ecstasy* (ca. 1628). Engraving, 52×30.3 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet (inv. no. RP-P-OB-7821). Image © Rijksmuseum.

Obviously, the *St. Augustine* altarpiece itself was not physically 'given' to Susanna, nor does the idea of giving as a transfer of an object from one person to another make sense if the object is a print that exists in hundreds of copies. What we have here is rather the gifting of artistic *inventione*, of mental creation and of the act of setting that creation down in visual form.⁵⁵ A similar dynamic may have been at work with the painted *Lamentation*, and if this was the case then Bellori could have known that Anthony 'gave' his invention (though not the canvas) to his sister from a dedicatory inscription installed near the work, from a now-lost publication or other document, or from personal communication with Sir Kenelm Digby, a friend of Anthony's in England and Bellori's self-professed source of information for the painter's *vita*.⁵⁶ This, I think, is the most plausible explanation for Bellori's seemingly contradictory statements that the picture was 'painted for' the Beguine community but was also 'given' to Susanna.

4. The Lamentation and Intercessory Prayer in the Counter-Reformation

Despite several scholars' claims that the Passion of Christ was a dominant and characteristic theme in the Low Countries Beguines' devotional lives,⁵⁷ it was in fact an unusual subject for a Beguine altarpiece in the

⁵⁵ The idea of artistic practice as a gift is also communicated in the curious inscription that Anthony included in the *Crucifixion* he painted for the Antwerp Dominican nuns in 1629. On a rock painted at the foot of the cross is written: 'Ne patris sui manibus terra gravis esset hoc saxum Cruci advolvebat et huic loco donabat Antonius van Dyck' ("That the earth might lie lightly on the bones of his father, Anthony van Dyck rolled this stone to the Cross and gave it to this place'). Translation by Rooses M., *Fifty Masterpieces of Anthony Van Dyck* (London – Philadelphia: 1900) 29. On artworks and other material objects as gifts in the early modern period, see Nagel A., "Gifts for Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna", *Art Bulletin* 79 (1997) 647–668; and Göttler C., "Affectionate Gifts: Rubens's Small Curiosities on Metallic Supports", in *Munuscula Amicorum: Contributions on Rubens and His Colleagues in Honour of Hans Vlieghe*, ed. K. van der Stighelen, 2 vols. (Turnhout: 2006), vol. II, 47–62.

 $^{^{56}}$ On Digby, see Petersson R., Sir Kenelm Digby: The Ornament of England, 1603–1665 (Cambridge, MA: 1956).

⁵⁷ There are several studies of Beguine art, most notably Vandenbroeck P. (ed.), Le jardin clos de l'âme: L'imaginaire des religieuses dans les Pays-Bas du Sud depuis le 13e siècle, exh. cat., Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels (Brussels: 1994); Eck X. van, "Between Restraint and Excess: The Decoration of the Church of the Great Beguinage at Mechelen in the Seventeenth Century", Simiolus 28 (2000) 129–162; and Ziegler J.E., Sculpture of Compassion: The Pietà and the Beguines in the Southern Low Countries c. 1300–c. 1600 (Brussels: 1992), argue that religious women, including the Beguines, were particularly interested in the Passion and that this interest is key to understanding their visual culture. I am,

seventeenth century. Far more common were scenes from the lives of female saints or the Virgin Mary, whose chastity, rectitude, and piety might reflect back on the Beguines themselves, perhaps helping to parry criticism they might receive as unenclosed religious women. We should therefore think carefully about the historical context in which it was determined that a *Lamentation* was the best choice for the high altar at St. Catherine's. Considering that Anthony van Dyck had a deeply personal stake in the work, but also that the administrators of the Beguinage (consisting of three Beguine 'mistresses' and the institution's priest) had the final say over works installed in their church, we can speculate that the painting registered the desires of *both* the painter himself *and* the women for whom the work would stand as the symbolic centre of their community. The most important nodes of intersection between these two sets of interests can be located, I think, in Counter-Reformation teachings about art, intercession, and affective devotion.

At a basic level, a Lamentation was a quintessentially Counter-Reformation choice for a high altarpiece:⁵⁹ it made the suffering of Christ the focus of the church space and, by displaying the body of the Saviour, created a visual counterpart to the true presence of that body in the Holy Sacrament. This type of image also provided justification for Catholic claims for the Virgin's preeminence in the celestial order: in giving up her son for the salvation of humankind she had made the greatest possible sacrifice, and it was because of this that she had influence with God con-

however, somewhat sceptical about the usefulness of the 'Passion model' for studying the early modern Court Beguinages. This is first because of a lack of source material about the Beguines' devotional lives, and second because of the ubiquity of the Passion in Christian, and especially in Counter-Reformation, religious culture. In addition, depending on such a model tends to reinforce essentialist constructions of 'female experience' and can discourage us from properly considering alternate interpretations.

⁵⁸ Those altarpieces (both extant and lost) which are currently traceable to the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are listed in my dissertation (*Unconventual Women*, Chapter 5); only three of the twenty-two works focus on Christ's Passion.

⁵⁹ Reforming the use and appearance of religious artworks so that they increased the populace's engagement with the story of Christ's life, the miracle of the transubstantiation, and the power of the Virgin and saints was paramount to the Counter-Reformation. Important guidelines were established during the last session of the Council of Trent in 1563 and elaborated upon by Federico Borromeo in his *De pictura sacra* of 1624; church architecture and the importance of placing focus on the host on the high altar were discussed in Carlo Borromeo's 1577 *Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesiasticae*. For English translations of these texts see Borromeo Federico, *Sacred Painting; Museum*, ed. and trans. K.S. Rothwell (Cambridge, MA: 2010); and Voelker, E.C., *Charles Borromeo's* Instructiones fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae: *A Translation with Commentary and Analysis*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Syracuse University: 1977).

cerning the world in the present. These basic issues would, of course, have been well-known to Anthony van Dyck both because Tridentine dictums on religious imagery were a major mediating factor in his professional life, and simply because they were pervasive in the Antwerp culture in which he was raised. In addition, by 1628 Van Dyck seems to have developed a marked affinity for images of the Virgin as well as a deep sense of personal connection with her. In his early years as a painter he had produced a number of images of Mary, several of which were Passion scenes, and his surviving 'Italian Sketchbook' demonstrates a clear interest in paintings of the Virgin and Child. That this interest was more than just artistic is intimated by Anthony's joining the Antwerp Jesuit sodality, whose main object was the practice and promotion of Marian devotion, in May of 1628.

The fact that Anthony van Dyck made the Beguinage *Lamentation* to adorn his own grave site, and that he clearly had a personal connection to its subject matter, allows us to read the painter's own interests into the painting with an unusual degree of confidence; however, the ways in which he depicted this moment also show a deliberate and carefully considered engagement with the work's Beguine audience. Anthony van Dyck would have known the Beguine community of St. Catherine's well, not only because his sisters lived there, but also because the Beguinage was home to many other members of the tightly interrelated circle of Antwerp artists and their families. Considering the open nature of the Court Beguinages, not to mention the fact that St. Catherine's was still in the midst of a massive decoration project, it is highly likely that not only Anthony but also a number of his colleagues visited their Beguine relatives and attended professions, funerals, and memorial masses in their church during these years. Anthony van Dyck thus would

⁶⁰ See Vlieghe, *Anton van Dijck;* Martin J.R., *Van Dyck as a Religious Artist* (Princeton, NJ: 1979); and Adriani G., *Anton van Dyck: Italienisches Skizzenbuch* (Vienna: 1940). Recent work on the Sketchbook includes Jaffé D., "New Thoughts on Van Dyck's Italian Sketchbook", *The Burlington Magazine* 143 (2001) 614–624.

⁶¹ On van Dyck and the sodality, see Muir C.D., "Art and Religion in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp: Van Dyck's 'Mystic Marriage of the Blessed Hermann-Joseph'", Simiolus 28 (2000) 51–69; and Filipczak Z.Z., "Van Dyck's 'Life of St Rosalie'", The Burlington Magazine 131 (1989) 693–698, esp. 695–696.

⁶² For example, Jacob Jordaens, Jan Fijt, Frans Francken II, and Frans Snyders all had sisters in the Beguinage. Jordaens's aunt Maria Goris also lived there, and Cornelis de Vos's daughter Susanna professed later in the century. See Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen* nos. 1401, 2046, 2468, 2047, 2292, and 2270; and Olyslager, *750 jaar begijnen* 120 and 134.

have understood the intense emphasis placed on prayer for souls in purgatory during these services. His particular treatment of the figures in the *Lamentation*, I argue, responded to this ritual environment by presenting its viewers with an image that could both be read as a representation of intercession at work and, by tapping into its viewers' emotions and senses, facilitate their efforts to initiate real intercession through their prayers.

Just before his return to Antwerp Anthony van Dyck had had extensive experience in producing intercession pictures in Palermo, where a devastating plague had spurred the revival of the local cult of St. Rosalie. As the city turned to this saint, whose relics were just at that time conveniently discovered, for help in securing God's mercy, Anthony received several commissions for paintings that would honour Rosalie and increase the people's devotion to her so that she might intercede on the city's behalf.⁶³ In the resulting works, Anthony van Dyck drew on older visual traditions for the depiction of intercession, several of which appear in the famous work attributed to Lorenzo Monaco in the Cloisters [Fig. 7].⁶⁴ These traditions centred on an overt dynamic of gesture and display evident in, for instance, the Virgin presenting the human supplicants and showing her breast to Christ as evidence of her maternal care, and Christ showing his wound to God as a reminder of his suffering. In the Rosalie paintings, in which Anthony van Dyck developed a new iconography for this previously little-known saint, we see him working out similar but subtler ways of painting intercession. He settled on the consistent use of two details. The first is the saint's use of her hands to point, palm open, down towards the suffering city and the prayers of its people, and the second is her face, which is raised towards the heavens in an attitude of quiet sadness, supplication, and hope [Fig. 8 & Fig. 9]. Anthony van Dyck continued to work with these devices after his return to Antwerp, and we can see him experimenting with them in his Virgin Mary as Intercessor of ca. 1628–1629 [Fig. 10]. This picture is dependent on Titian's Assumption in the Frari, and its compositional elements retain the sense of that iconographical theme, but it also includes figures of angels holding the symbols of the Passion,

⁶³ On the Rosalie images, see Liedtke, "Anthony van Dyck", 26–28; Sterling C., "Van Dyck's Paintings of St. Rosalie", *The Burlington Magazine* 74 (1939): 53–63; Filipczak Z.Z., "Van Dyck's 'Life of St Rosalie'"; and Barnes – Miller – Poorter – Vey, *Van Dyck*, cat. nos. II.14, II.15, and II.16.

⁶⁴ On this work, see Hale C., "The Technique and Materials of the 'Intercession of Christ and the Virgin' Attributed to Lorenzo Monaco", in Villers C. (ed.), *The Fabric of Images: European Paintings of Textile Supports in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (London: 2000) 31–41.



Fig. 7. Attributed to Lorenzo Monaco (Piero di Giovanni), *The Intercession of Christ and the Virgin* (early fifteenth century). Tempera on canvas, 239.4 \times 153 cm. New York, Cloisters Collection. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Fig. 8. Anthony van Dyck, Saint Rosalie Interceding for Palermo (1624). Oil on canvas, 170 \times 143 cm. Puerto Rico, Museo de Arte de Ponce (inv. no. 60.0159). Image © Museo de Arte de Ponce.



Fig. 9. Anthony van Dyck, Saint Rosalie Interceding for Palermo (1624). Oil on canvas, 100 \times 74 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Fig. 10. Anthony van Dyck, *The Virgin Mary as Intercessor* (1628–1629). Oil on canvas, 118×102 cm. Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection (inv. no. 1942.9.88). Image © National Gallery of Art.

signalling Mary's sacrifice of her son as the basis on which her intercessory pleas are founded. 65

The same devices can be seen, I believe, in the figure of the Virgin in the Beguinage *Lamentation*, except that the human beings to whose prayers

⁶⁵ See Barnes - Miller - Poorter - Vey, Van Dyck, cat. no. III.37.

the Virgin calls attention are not those depicted inside the picture plane or imagined below the interceding figure, but rather are the living faithful who stand directly in front of the painting. This connection between the image and the viewer's world is made by the unusual position of Mary's left hand, 66 which is raised, palm up, so that in the Van Dycks' time her fingers would have pointed towards the two-hundred-plus Beguines who faced this picture as their priest instructed them to pray for the souls of their institution's benefactors in purgatory. The attitude and expression of the Virgin's face, which is raised up towards God with a look of deep but composed sorrow, completes the linkage. She thus acknowledges the prayers of the humans before her, asks for God to answer these prayers, and to support her request reminds the latter of her own sacrifice by displaying the body of her dead son. This is, of course, not the only way that the picture could have been read by its viewers, who might have approached the work in the context of meditations on the Stations of the Cross, the Life of the Virgin, or the Magdalene's Penitence, or some theme from a now-lost sermon.⁶⁷ But the gesture and gaze of the Virgin here were fairly unusual for a *Lamentation*, and considering Anthony van Dyck's previous work on intercessory pictures it seems likely that these details were chosen to allow for such an interpretation. If the painting was understood this way by its contemporaneous viewers, and if those viewers used it to help them focus on the process of intercession and the role of their own prayers within it, then the artist himself, who like most Catholics of his time 'commit[ed] his soul [...] to God almighty, his creator, through the intercession of the Holy Mother of God and Virgin Mary' in his testament, and who knew that his own body would lie under the

⁶⁶ Van Dyck may have adapted this particularly graceful gesture from Annibale Carracci's *Lamentation* for Alessandro Farnese of about 1600, a famous work which he would have likely seen while in Italy and which was also reproduced in a number of engravings. The original is now in the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples. See Borea E., *Annibale Carracci e i suoi incisori* (Rome: 1986) 205–208.

⁶⁷ These were common themes in the religious culture of Antwerp at the time and also appear in several books mentioned in the Beguine wills: Michiel Zachmoorter's *Sponsus sanguinem; Den bloedighen bruydegom: Vertoont in XX meditatien* (Antwerp, G. van Wolsschaten: 1627, with later editions in 1634, 1650, and 1683), listed in Anna Schrynmakers's 1658 will; a book of the hours of the Virgin owned by Clara de Moy in 1634 (Antwerp Diocesan Archive, X. Begijnhof, 34), a book of the *'Eremietessen'* (female hermits) mentioned in Maria le Mesureur's will of 1626 (Duverger, *Antwerpse Kunstinventarissen* no. 571), and several *Legends of the Saints* (Duverger, *Antwerpse Kunstinventarissen* nos. 571, 1660, and 2003).

stones near the masses said before this image, could have expected to partake of the spiritual benefits.⁶⁸

5. Affective Prayer and the Sensory Imagination

I further propose that the *Lamentation* engaged with, or perhaps rather helped to activate, the Beguines' devotional practice on another level by responding to its sensory and emotional character. Here we need to look at the broader religious culture of reformed Catholicism in early seventeenth-century Antwerp, and in particular at Jesuit approaches to meditation on the suffering of Christ. Although St. Catherine's had no official ties with the Antwerp Jesuits, the Jesuits' vigorous activity in terms of preaching, teaching, and the publication of theological and devotional texts made them a dominant force in religious life in the city. At the heart of Jesuit spirituality was Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, an intense program of meditation that aimed to bring the practitioner, through her or his own efforts and concentration, to a spiritual revelation. The author instructs the practitioner to use a visual image of a biblical episode to focus the mind, and to then 'apply the five senses to the subject matter [...] this consists in seeing in imagination the persons [...] hearing what they are saying, or what they might say [...] to smell the infinite fragrance, and taste the infinite sweetness of divinity [...] and to apply the sense of touch, by embracing and kissing the place where the persons stand or are seated, always taking care to draw some fruit from this'.69 Through these acts of sensory imagination, the devotee was to place him- or herself *in* the historical event, and this immersion was meant to result in a deep,

⁶⁸ See Eire, *From Madrid to Purgatory* 168–231 ("Planning the Soul's Journey"), and on visual strategies employed in intercession pictures after the Reformation: Göttler, *Kunst des Fegefeuers* 298–317.

⁶⁹ Puhl L.J., The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph (Chicago: 1986) 121–127, 55–61. These instructions are given for the 'Fifth Contemplation' of the second week, which focuses on the Nativity. Nearly identical instructions appear for the 'Second Exercise' of the first week, a meditation on hell, in which the practitioner is instructed to meditate with all of his or her senses on the horrors of damnation. On the Jesuits' philosophy of sensory perception, see Simmons A., "Jesuit Aristotelian Education: The De anima Commentaries", in O'Malley J.W. – Bailey G.A. – Harris S.J. – Kennedy T.F. (eds.), The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773 (Toronto: 1999) 522–527. I have found one possible instance of a Beguine owning Ignatius's book: Elizabeth Batkin's 1645 will lists a 'leesboeck [...] wesende de Christelycke Oeffeninge ende Meditatie' (Duverger, Antwerpse Kunstinventarissen no. 1344).

emotional empathy with the holy figures, culminating finally in increased understanding of and closeness with God. The engagement of the senses was thus fundamental to Ignatian spirituality, and the widespread activity and influence of the Jesuits, coupled with a revival of interest in late-medieval mystical texts, made the activation of the sensory imagination integral to the experience of viewing post-Tridentine Catholic artworks.⁷⁰

The Spiritual Exercises was published in numerous editions, and its ideas about the connections between art, the imagination, and the senses were also repeated, reworked, and filtered through countless later texts.⁷¹ In his 1610 books on the city of Antwerp, for example, Carolus Scribanius (provincial head of the Jesuits in the Southern Netherlands), extolled Antwerp artists for their ability to present the picture as a narrative moment, and thus to draw in the viewer: in this way he or she could almost see the characters' previous and ensuing actions, hear their prayers and cries of anguish, and even read their thoughts and emotions.⁷² The Antwerp Beguines also owned texts that emphasized close, structured concentration on religious images, such as the Jesuit Antoine Sucquet's Vita vitae aeternae; a chapter of which was explicitly dedicated to the senses, as well as those that explored the relationship between the physical senses and spiritual revelation, like St. Teresa's *Vita*. 73 Ignatian relationships between images, the senses, and humankind's ability to approach the divine would have been not just familiar to Anthony van Dyck and the Antwerp Beguines, but rather fundamental to their daily religious lives.

In the *Lamentation*, Anthony van Dyck reacted to these issues particularly in the figure of the Magdalene, who in her adoration of Christ's

⁷⁰ Dekoninck R., *Ad imaginem: Statuts, fonctions et usages de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVII^e siècle (Geneva: 2005) 161–185; Endean P., "The Ignatian Prayer of the Senses", <i>The Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990) 391–418; Smith, *Sensuous Worship*; Berbara M., "Esta pena tan sabrosa': Teresa of Avila and the Figurative Arts in Early Modern Europe", in Dijkhuizen P. van – Enenkel K.A.E. (eds.), *The Sense of Suffering: Constructions of Physical Pain in Early Modern Culture* (Leiden: 2009) 267–298, and Morgan D., *The Sacred Heart of Jesus: The Visual Evolution of a Devotion* (Amsterdam: 2008) 26–27.

⁷¹ See Begheyn P. (ed.), Jesuit Books in the Low Countries 1540–1773: A Selection from the Maurits Sabbe Library (Leuven: 2009).

⁷² See the translations published in Held J.S., "Carolus Scribanius's Observations on Art in Antwerp", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 59 (1996) 174–204, in particular the passages on Frans Floris's *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, Quentijn Metsys's *Lamentation*, and William Key's lost *Crucifixion* (201–203).

⁷³ Duverger, *Antwerpse Kunstinventarissen* no. 696 (Maria Smolders's will of 1630; the Beguine owned both books) and 1519 and 1603 (the 1648 will of Maria van der Stock, who owned Teresa's *Vita*, and the 1650 will of Johanna van der Mandere, who owned a 'book by Mother Theresia bound in red leather').

body was available as a kind of mirror, or proxy, for the Beguine viewers' projected devotional selves.⁷⁴ Since the Middle Ages, the Magdalene had served as a prototype for the penitent sinner, and her appearance on the high altar of St. Catherine's would have therefore helped set the tone for the Beguines' prayers for the expiation of sins for souls in purgatory. 75 But Anthony van Dyck took the viewer's identification with the painted saint several steps further by tapping into the deeply sensual character of Jesuitinfluenced devotion. Through the Magdalene's delicate kiss, directly on Christ's wounds, the spectator was invited to imagine the sweetness of his sacrificial blood, and to equate that taste with the communion wafer in her mouth. She might then have imagined she felt Christ's fingertips on hers, and envisioned herself there with him in the historical moment. As her idea of the event was formed by the visual cues in the painting, the Beguine viewer could have pictured herself as the Magdalene who, having washed Christ's body just a few moments before, heard the anguished sighs of the Virgin and St. John, and accompanied them through their next painful task, as they wrapped Christ's body in the shroud, so prominently pictured in this painting, and carried him into the tomb, 'off-stage' on the left-hand side of the composition. Through this kind of meditation, facilitated by the painter's delicate, visually seductive, and highly affective treatment of his subject, and especially by the intermediary role played by the Magdalene, the Beguines (and perhaps to an even greater extent, those who had commissioned them to pray) viewing the picture hoped to become spiritually closer to Christ, the Virgin, and God, and thereby increase the chance that their prayers would be answered. And Anthony van Dyck himself had every reason to use his skills in the furtherance of this work; since he not only expected to benefit spiritually from the masses performed near his interred body, but also because the more his viewers, including his own sisters, were inspired by the painting, the more likely they were to offer up a prayer for the soul of its maker.

⁷⁴ Paul Vandenbroeck has stated that the Beguines were especially devoted to the Magdalene for just these reasons; however, in my research I have not found her to have been a prominent figure at the early modern Beguinages. As with the Passion, I think we can more accurately locate this iconography in the context of Counter-Reformation Antwerp than in a generalized 'Beguine' model of piety. See Vandenbroeck, *Le jardin clos de l'âme*.

⁷⁵ See Jansen K.L., *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: 2001); and Baert B. (ed.), *Noli me tangere: Mary Magdalene, One Person, Many Images* (Leuven: 2006).

And here, finally, we can address the question of the portrait. There are at least four oil sketches by Anthony van Dyck that depict young women with long, red-blond hair – one in the Metropolitan Museum, another in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, and two more in private collections. ⁷⁶ Because of their age and their physical features, which are not unlike Anthony's own in his self-portraits, it has often been suggested that the artists' sisters were the models for these pictures. We might thus compare these figures with the depiction of the Magdalene in the Beguinage *Lamentation* to see if they could plausibly represent the same woman.

Perhaps the greatest affinities lie between Van Dyck's Vienna study [Fig. 11] and his Magdalene in the Beguines' painting, where the nasal bridges, high cheekbones, and thick, wavy hair are quite similar. But that being the case, the Magdalene's face is painted in such an indistinct way, darkened by shadow, that it would be impossible for us, based only on pictures, to ascertain that she resembled anyone specific at all. If Bellori's statement is true, then this is a strange portrait indeed, especially coming from a painter with such great facility and interest in the representation of individuality in the human face. But this does not necessarily mean, I think, that Bellori was wrong. If my interpretation of this work, the motivations behind its production, and the religious uses to which it was put, is correct, then Anthony van Dyck had clear incentive both to offer artistic tribute to his sister Susanna, perhaps materialized here in a recognizable profile for the Magdalene and/or recorded in a long-lost inscription, and to de-individualize the figure of the Magdalene. In the first place, provincial councils in the Southern Netherlands had condemned the practice of representing living persons on altarpieces, which would have made the inclusion of an obvious portrait of Susanna problematic.⁷⁷ Secondly, and in keeping with Van Dyck's attention to the religious needs of his viewers, the obscuring of the Magdalene's features allowed her to stand as a sort of everywoman; in other words, by avoiding the kind of singularity that would create distance between the saint and the viewer, Van Dyck imbued her instead with a kind of hazy anonymity that might facilitate spectators' mentally putting themselves in her place. This would, in turn,

 $^{^{76}}$ See Barnes – Miller – Poorter – Vey, $Van\ Dyck$, cat. nos. I.4, I.41, I.42, Moir, $Anthony\ van\ Dyck$ 52–53; Liedtke, "Anthony van Dyck", 16–17; and Held J., "Van Dyck's Oil Sketches", in Wheelock – Barnes – Held, $Van\ Dyck$ 327–329.

⁷⁷ See Göttler C., "Securing Space in a Foreign Place: Peter Paul Rubens's "Saint Teresa" for the Portuguese Merchant-Bankers in Antwerp", *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 57 (1999): 133–151, note 4.



Fig. 11. Anthony van Dyck, Study of a Young Woman (1620?). Oil on paper, mounted on panel, 49×45.7 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (inv. no. GG_{-514}). Image © Kunsthistorisches Museum.

increase the effectiveness of the viewers' meditations. Such an idea of the 'portrait', like that of the 'gift' outlined above, may not have fit into mainstream notions of artistic practice, but it would have responded perfectly well to the dynamics at work inside the Beguinage church.

6. Conclusions

In the Antwerp in which the Van Dyck siblings grew up, every image of the Virgin was potentially miraculous. An illustration of this potentiality can be found in a story told in one of the sermons published by Franciscus Costerus, founder of the Jesuit sodality in Antwerp.⁷⁸ One day, went the story, a painter who was very devoted to the Virgin Mary was hired to polychrome a statue of her that was installed on the portal of a church. The painter put all of his effort into depicting her in the most beautiful way possible, while he painted the 'serpent of the Devil', on which the figure of the Virgin stood, as 'very ugly, black, dark, as befitted the Prince of Darkness himself'. This angered the Devil, who summoned a fierce wind to the church, sending paint pots flying and threatening to knock the painter from his perch. Terrified, the painter 'raised his heart and his hand to the Virgin', and as he did so the image miraculously came to life, catching him with her own hand and saving him from falling. The devil was, naturally, defeated by this miracle.⁷⁹

This tale, though not about the Beguinage *Lamentation*, or indeed any actual artwork, draws together the various cultural beliefs concerning artistic creation, exchange, prayer, and the interaction between the material and spiritual worlds that defined the mindset of the Van Dyck siblings and their Antwerp contemporaries. For Anthony van Dyck, the painting of the *Lamentation*, and the use of his talents to imbue its figures with pathos, grace, and beauty, was an act of personal piety, one which might help to save his soul just as Costerus's praying painter was saved from the Devil's storm. At the same time, the artist was designing a picture that would answer the needs of its most important viewers, his sisters and their fellow Beguines, by facilitating their meditations and bringing them closer to God. While their personal interests were certainly diverse and varied, everyone involved in the production of this work hoped that, as a reward for the diligence with which it was painted, the devoutness with which prayers were offered up before it, and the generosity of those who

⁷⁸ Costerus Franciscus, *Sermoonen op alle epistelen van son-daghen van den gheheelen iare* (Antwerp: 1616) Book 3: "Waerachtighe Historien: Stichtighe Exempelen ende Sekere Miraculen [...]" 17 (quoted below). On Costerus and the Antwerp Jesuits, see Marnef, "Protestant Conversions" 38–39.

^{79 &#}x27;In Nederlandt was eenen schilder seer devoot aen onser liever Vrouwe [...] Het is ghebeurt dat hy in't portael der Kercke het beeldt der H. Moeder Maria schilderde; daer hy alle syn beste in dede / om na sijn conste / die alderschoonste te make / ende onder haer voeten maeckte hy het serpent den duyvel seer leelijck / swert / duyster / ghyelijck den Prince der duysternisse betaemde: Dit speet den duyvel [...] doen den schilder op sijn stellagie stont / ende dit leelijck monster schilderde / soo isser eenen grooten wint ghekomen / diet al om verre ghewaept heeft / soo stellagie / soo instrumenten der schildereijen: Den schilder dit ghevoelende hief sijn herte / ende handt tot onser lieve Vrouwe / die hem terstont ghehouwen heeft / ende met heur handt bewaert van't vallen / tot datter liens quamen die hem ongequetst neder haelen'.

commissioned the masses said on its altar, the Virgin Mary would intercede to help the suffering souls of the dead. By considering the broader religious economy of Antwerp and the important roles that the Beguines of St. Catherine played within it, I hope to have not only increased our understanding of one of Anthony van Dyck's most subtle and evocative works, but also to have suggested ways in which we might expand our thinking on artists, patronage, and the active engagement of the senses in religious practices in this period.

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TASTING GOD: THE SWEETNESS OF CRYING IN THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

Joseph Imorde

Probably no other pope in the early modern age cried more than Ippolito Aldobrandini (Clement VIII, 1592–1605). Whenever the body of Christ, and therefore the Most Holy Sacrament, was concerned the pope would sink into a state of lachrymosity, shedding tears that his audience witnessed, tears that were probably intended for all to see. Throughout his reign, contemporaries noted that Clement VIII would not only cry for long periods but that he would wail aloud during holy rites.² The Venetian ambassador to the Holy See, Giovanni Delfino, was only one of many to remark that Clement always cried during the daily mass. This lachrymose demeanour began at the moment of his election, when he threw himself upon the floor in the Cappella Paolina in the Vatican Palace, at the celebration of the Eucharist, and burst into tears over his elevation to the papacy.³ During the Corpus Christi procession that same year, when the barefooted pope carried the consecrated Host in his own hands through the Borgo, rivers of tears streamed down his cheeks in such abundance that witnesses described how some auditors of the Rota were continually engaged in drying his face with towels.⁴ All in all, Clement VIII's public devotional life was characterised by tears on a scale and in a manner seldom witnessed before.5

¹ For other examples, see Sposato P., "Fonti per la storia di S. Francesco di Paola: La sua Canonizzazione attraverso il 'Diarium' di Paride De Grassi prefetto delle ceremonie pontificie sotto Leone X", *Calabria nobilissima* 33 (1957) 1–30, at 26–27.

² Baumgarten P.M., Neue Kunde von alten Bibeln: Mit zahlreichen Beiträgen zur Kulturund Literaturgeschichte Roms am Ausgange des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts (Rome: 1922) 15.

³ Baumgarten, *Neue Kunde von alten Bibeln* 15: 'Clemens gestatoria vectus (sella) ad aram sanctorum Apostolorum Simonis et Judae ante Eucharistiam procubuit effusa ingenti lacrymarum vi, quibus in vita illi nihil familiarius fuit; conversa aula speculatrice principalium actionum in preteritorum pontificum mores consuetudinesque extollebat in Gregorio XIII serenitatem oris gravitatemque sermonis [...] in Clemente geminatas lacrymas mirabatur cum inter sacrificandum et inter divina uberrime fleret'.

⁴ Baumgarten, Neue Kunde von alten Bibeln 15.

⁵ For crying in general, see Ohm T., *Die Gebetsgebärden der Völker und das Christentum* (Leiden: 1948) 197–209. Also Imorde J., "Dulciores sunt lacrymae orantis, quam gaudia

Clement's conspicuous tears were due neither to some 'nervous irritability' nor to a psychopathological condition, as some historians have speculated, but expressed his attachment to a long-established devotional tradition that the pope enacted and affected in body and mind. The pope followed the example of the early Christian faithful whose abundant crying was detailed in that copious literary corpus of the early Church Fathers that was systematically read and re-read during the Counter-Reformation. It was above all the Jesuit neo-scholastics at the Collegio Romano who rediscovered the many catalogues of tears compiled during the Middle Ages – by authors ranging from John Cassian (ca. 360–435) to St. Bonaventure (1221–1274) – and adapted them to the needs of contemporary theological discourse.⁷ In his *Istruttione per meditare* of 1600, for instance, the Jesuit Bartolomeo Ricci drew upon St. Gregory the Great (ca. 540-604) to distinguish three principal types of spiritual crying, depending on whether it resulted from profound shock or remorse (compunctio/contritio), from compassion (compassio), or from inner desire or sweetness (dulcedo).8 This sequence closely followed medieval tradition inasmuch as attempts to categorize spiritual tears had always assigned primacy to crying in cases of remorse and penance. The early literature contained hundreds of accolades for the *compunctio lacrymarum* or the *contritio cordis*. According to St. John Chrysostom (ca. 349–407), tears of penance were not only sweeter than the purest honey, but also more refreshing than wine and more nourishing than bread.9 Moreover, the purifying effect of tears of

theatrorum: Zum Wechselverhältnis von Kunst und Religion um 1600", Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte 63 (2000) 1–14; idem, Affektübertragung (Berlin: 2004).

⁶ Baumgarten, Neue Kunde von alten Bibeln (1922) 16.

⁷ Benke C., *Die Gabe der Tränen: Zur Tradition und Theologie eines vergessenen Kapitels der Glaubensgeschichte*, Studien zur systematischen und spirituellen Theologie 35 (Würzburg: 2002) 98–99. For Bonaventure see Balogh J., "Das 'Gebetsweinen'", *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 27 (1929) 365–368, at 366 with reference to Bonaventure: 'Sex sunt fletus incitamenta, et sex fletus impedimenta, et sex fletus emolumenta. Fletus incitamenta: recognitio propriae culpae; incolatus praesentis vitae; timor gehennae; recordatio passionis dominicae; recordatio humanae miseriae; desiderium celestis patriae. Fletus impedimenta: superbiae elatio; terrenorum affectio; cordis compressio; nimia occupatio; ignorantiae excaecatio; peccati magnitudo. Fletus emolumenta vel utilitatis: spiritum devotum lavat; spiritum malignum necat; terram cordis irrigat; sitim sedat; orando efficaciter impetrat'.

⁸ Vgl. Ricci Bartolomeo, *Instructio* [. . .] *de modo recte meditandi de rebus divinis* (Mainz, Balthazar Lippius: 1605) 486–489 (pars III, cap. V: "De lachrymis spiritualibus").

⁹ Zappert G., "Über den Ausdruck des geistigen Schmerzes im Mittelalter: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Förderungs-Momente des Rührenden im Romantischen", *Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 5 (1854) 73–136, at 77.

repentance could be compared with that of lye, for just as lye cleaned the flesh, tears of penance washed the soul.¹⁰

From at least the time of St. Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 293–373), crying while performing devotional duties was considered to be a charisma, a divine Grace, and was called the donum lacrimarum. 11 It was because the gift of tears was God-given that hagiography, from the very start, overflowed with wondrous reports of the streaming tears of sanctity.¹² It was said that St. John the Nazarite shed tears so endlessly that his eyelids eventually wasted away; that the weeping of St. Asterius of Amasea (ca. 350-ca. 410) was so unrelenting that his eyelashes fell out and that he had to carry a cloth with him everywhere to soak up the incessant flow.¹³ And there were more recent saintly bawlers. The two shining examples in the West were St. Dominic (1170–1221), whose eyes (according to the Golden Legend) 'were, so to speak, a fountain of tears', and St. Francis of Assisi (1181/82-1226), whose gift for crying almost cost him his eyesight.¹⁴ Modern devotees who sought a reputation for saintliness therefore had to follow such heroic examples. To enter the club of the blessed they must demonstrate their own, personal donum lacrimarum.

Without a doubt the paragon of the Catholic Reform's passion for tears was St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), who sought to equal Dominic and Francis in almost every respect. To read the few surviving pages of his *Spiritual Diary*, ¹⁵ written from 2 February 1544 to 27 February 1545, is to be inundated by a deluge of tears. ¹⁶ While the early entries describe as accurately as possible the wild bouts of crying and Trinitarian visions that accompanied Ignatius's prayers and celebration of Mass, the later ones

¹⁰ Zappert, "Über den Ausdruck des geistigen Schmerzes im Mittelalter" 77–78.

¹¹ Adnès P., "Larmes", *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 9 (Paris: 1976) 287–303, at 292. See Plattig M., "Vom Trost der Tränen: Ignatius von Loyola und die Gabe der Tränen", *Studies in Spirituality* 2 (1992) 148–199, at 151.

¹² McEntire S., *The Doctrine of Compunction in Medieval England: Holy Tears*, Studies in Medieval Literature 8 (Lewiston, NJ: 1990) 29: 'After the sixth century the topos of tears as a characteristic of sanctity continues to be represented'.

¹³ Vgl. Wensink A.J., "Über das Weinen in den monotheistischen Religionen Vorderasiens", in Weil G. (ed.), *Festschrift Eduard Sachau: Zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern* (Berlin: 1915) 26–35, at 26 with reference to Land J.P.N. (ed.), *Anecdota Syriaca*, 4 vols. (Leiden: 1862–1875), vol. II, 24; Zappert, "Über den Ausdruck des geistigen Schmerzes im Mittelalter" 79 n. 39.

¹⁴ Benz R. (ed.), Die Legenda aurea des Jacobus de Voragine (Berlin: 1963) 595, 837.

¹⁵ Ignatius von Loyola, "Der Bericht des Pilgers", in *Ignatius von Loyola: Deutsche Werkausgabe*, 2 vols. (Würzburg: 1993–1998), vol. II, 1–84, at 83 n. 296.

¹⁶ Statistics in de Guibert J., *La spiritualità della compagnia di Gesù*, saggio storico (Rome: 1992) 45. See also Plattig, *Vom Trost der Tränen* 148–199.

are solely concerned with recording whether that day's prayers had been accompanied by tears or not.¹⁷ The 175 instances of shedding tears in the first forty days of the *Spiritual Diary* alone give some idea of the significance that the 'dono delle lachrime' held for Ignatius, and of the important role it would therefore play in the Jesuit order's religious orientation.¹⁸

Ignatius was the personification of crying from deeply felt emotion (dulcedo), for he described God's love as a 'spiritual sweetness' (suavidad spiritual). Indeed, when he was in a particularly pious mood, Ignatius fathomed within himself 'a fair degree of sweetness, clarity, mixed with colour', and that 'inner sweetness' which frequently caused him to cry. 19 For Ignatius, tears, devotions, and prayers were inextricably linked with the metaphor of sweetness, which was itself bound up with the sensation of taste.²⁰ In his Spiritual Exercises, he had already announced that a truly religious person must assimilate the infinite mildness and sweetness of the deity in both smell and taste. He believed that a deliberate 'embodiment' of the five senses and, in particular, of inner taste and sight, offered the most accurate meter of powerful emotional states. By controlling and classifying one's feelings and sensations, one might determine whether the emotional experience was an impulse of mercy brought on by the Holy Spirit or a diabolical delusion.²¹ Ignatius's techniques for evaluative self-perception were supposed to make the taste of divine Grace palpable, and accordingly the experience of oneself. For, as the Jesuit Louis Lallement tells us, when the soul tastes divine sweetness it chooses to believe with greater tenacity, and it does so because knowledge based on experience is self-evidentiary.²²

The unbroken tradition of describing sensations of revelation with metaphors of taste goes back to the Bible itself. In *Psalm* 33:9, for instance, believers are exhorted to 'taste and see how sweet the Lord is' ('gustate

 $^{^{17}}$ See *Acta Sanctorum Julii* [...], 7 [...] (Antwerp, Jacques du Moulin: $_{1731}$) 528, § LXI ("Donum lacrymarum ac deliciae caelestes praesertim ex affectu erga sanctissimam Trinitatem").

¹⁸ Guibert, La Spiritualité de la compagnie de Jésus 45 and 48.

 $^{^{19}\,}$ Marxer F., Die inneren geistlichen Sinne: Ein Beitrag zur Deutung ignationischer Mystik (Freiburg: 1963) 105.

²⁰ Marxer, Die inneren geistlichen Sinne 25.

²¹ Schröder G., Logos und List: Zur Entwicklung der Ästhetik in der frühen Neuzeit (Königstein: 1985) 255; Viller M., La spiritualité des premiers siècles chrétiens, Bibliothèque catholique des sciences religieuses 32 (Paris: 1930) 90.

²² Lallemant L., Die geistliche Lehre (Lucerne: 1948) 135 (IV, IV, a).

et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus').²³ However, these words posed a problem for exegesis, that is, how to relate the two modes of perceiving God to one another. Whereas St. Thomas Aguinas (1225–1274), for example, attached greater importance to seeing, and believed that tasting God's goodness must precede cognition of his essence ('visio beatifica [...] prius gustatur, postea autem videtur'), Richard of Saint Victor (d. 1173) ranked tasting above seeing.²⁴ To Richard's way of thinking, tasting surpassed seeing because taste alone assimilated the sweetness of God in contemplative worship and became consubstantial with the believer through an act of willful internalization.²⁵ Striving for a more precise formulation, the Franciscan St. Bonaventure (1221-1274) explained the elevation of taste over sight by attributing the gift of the intellect to vision, but the gift of wisdom to taste.²⁶ The gift of the intellect consisted in possessing speculative knowledge, in knowing through 'insight' (quasi cognitio per visum); the gift of wisdom, by contrast, was rooted in knowledge acquired practically and experientially, in knowledge based on the senses of smell and taste (cognitio per gustum).27 Wisdom (or sapientia) was of greater value because it extended beyond the limits of the intellect, to include the enjoyment of dulcedo Dei.28 For the Franciscans, then, the best way to know God lay in 'tasting the sweetness of his love'. This type of knowledge was 'more sublime, noble and far more pleasurable than searching for God on the basis of reason'.²⁹ Bonaventure found examples of such unthinking self-transcendence in the Confessions of St. Augustine,

²³ See Ziegler J., Dulcedo Dei: Ein Beitrag zur Theologie der griechischen und lateinischen Bibel, Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen 13.2 (Münster: 1937) 89–90; Chatillion J., "Dulcedo, Dulcedo Dei", Dictionnaire de Spiritualité 3 (Paris: 1957) 1777–1795, at 1781. See Lüers G., Die Sprache der deutschen Mystik des Mittelalters im Werke der Mechthild von Magdeburg (Munich: 1926) 16–17.

²⁴ Marxer, Die inneren geistlichen Sinne 73.

²⁵ Ohly F., Süsse Nägel der Passion: Ein Beitrag zur theologischen Semantik, Saecula spiritualia 21 (Baden – Baden: 1989) 68.

²⁶ Freimark H., *Das erotische Element im Okkultismus* (Pfullingen in Württemberg: 1922) 15; Rahner K., "Die Lehre von den 'geistlichen Sinnen' im Mittelalter", in idem, *Schriften zur Theologie* 12: "Theologie aus Erfahrung des Geistes" (Zurich – Einsiedeln – Cologne: 1975) 137–172, at 148–150.

²⁷ Adnès, Goût spirituel 632.

²⁸ Ohly, Süsse Nägel der Passion 67–68; Sandaeus Maximilianus, Theologia Mystica (Mainz: 1627) 480; Schrader L., Sinne und Sinnesverknüpfungen: Studien und Materialien zur Vorgeschichte der Synästhesie und zur Bewertung der Sinne in der italienischen, spanischen und französischen Literatur, Beiträge zur neueren Literaturgeschichte, 3rd s., vol. 9 (Heidelberg: 1969) 119.

²⁹ Tanquerey A., Grundriss der aszetischen und mystischen Theologie (Paris: 1931) 688 (981.I.).

who often savoured revelations that he had experienced physically.³⁰ The Confessions were, one might say, sugared with the delicacies of dulcedo Dei: God is addressed as 'my sweetness', 'my holy sweetness', as the 'sweetness that never deceived', the 'blissful and assured sweetness', the 'veritable and highest sweetness', and as the 'truly good and assured sweetness'; and, altogether, as the 'sum of all sweetnesses'. 31 However, in order to enjoy the infinite sweetness of dulcedo Dei in any way, one must first develop an exceptional palate, the so-called *palatum cordis* or 'palate of the heart'. 32 Augustine was convinced that such a palate developed only in saintly persons, certainly not in disbelievers, nor in those who lacked any sense of the dulcedo Dei or who regarded tasting God as some act of pure sentimentality.³³ Medieval Christendom and early modern Catholicism would also produce – one may say without any fear of exaggeration – a considerable number of people with an outstanding *palatum cordis*. Not only did the metaphor of taste dominate mystical revelation literature for centuries, but in countless texts the word 'sweet' enjoyed the status of a technical term to label these powerful, inner feelings.³⁴ All saints were distinguished by their special aptitude for the gustus mysticus or gusto *spirituale*, and they all had a sensorium perfectly attuned to the sweetness of God, that is to the *cognitio experimentalis* of taste.³⁵

But voices were also raised in warning. In his extremely influential tract, the *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1609), St. Francis de Sales, bishop of Geneva, admitted the benefits of tender love impulses but also cautioned his readers against taking their pious sensitivities too seriously:

Piety does not lie in the sweetness of consolation, in the perceptible tenderness of the heart, which evokes in us tears and sighs and awakens in us a certain comforting piety when we perform spiritual exercises. No, these things are certainly not to be equated with piety. There are souls who enjoy such

³⁰ Ziegler, *Dulcedo Dei* 93; Lorenz R., "Fruitio Dei bei Augustin", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 63 (1950/1951) 75–132, at 109–113.

³¹ Ziegler, Dulcedo Dei 94-95.

³² Ziegler, Dulcedo Dei 90.

³³ Maiburger P., "Zur 'Dulcedo Dei' im Alten Testament", *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 94 (1985) 143–157, at 157.

³⁴ Hoefs, K.-H., Erfahrung Gottes bei Bonaventura: Untersuchungen zum Begriff Erfahrung', in seinem Bezug zum Göttlichen, Erfurter theologische Studien 57 (Leipzig: 1989) 30; Armknecht W., Geschichte des Wortes 'süß', I. Teil: Bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters, Germanische Studien 171 (Berlin: 1936) 87; Ohly, Süsse Nägel der Passion 6.

³⁵ See Cargnoni C. (ed.), *I frati cappuccini: Documenti e testimonianze del primo secolo*, 4 vols. in 5 (Perugia: 1988–1993), vol. III/2, 5003: (Brother Francesco da Valdobbiadene) '[...] aveva gran gusto spirituale'.

tenderness and consolation and are still very immoral, and consequently do not possess the true love of God let alone true piety [...]. Real piety does not consist in such tenderness, in being carried away by one's feelings in this fashion; at times these things come from a soft and sensitive character, at others they come from an evil enemy; he wants us to play around with them and, for this reason, fires our imagination until it has such an effect.³⁶

Likewise for St. Teresa of Avila, the love of God consisted first and foremost, not in shedding tears, nor in that 'sweetness and tenderness' that people desired and found pleasureable, 'but rather in serving Him in justice, fortitude, and humility'. Indeed, she goes on to say that people who believed that they could not get by without such sweetness actually annoyed her: '[...] when the servants of God, who are men of weight, learning, and sense make so much account, as I see they do, whether God gives them sweetness in devotion or not, I am disgusted when I listen to them. I do say that they ought not to accept it, and make much of it, when God gives it – because, when He gives it, His Majesty sees it to be necessary for them – but I do say that they ought not to grow weary when they have it not'.³⁷

Nonetheless, the caveats of Francis de Sales and Teresa of Avila only betray the degree to which desire for more sensitive and sensual (that is, sweeter and more tearful) reassurances of unmediated communication with the Almighty had become widespread within the Catholic Reformation.³⁸ In fact, almost all the reform orders placed their hopes in the true emotions of the believers, and Ignatius was not the only Jesuit who cried.³⁹ St. Francis Xavier (1506–1552), who worked as a missionary in India and

³⁶ The translation is mine. The English editions of the text translate 'douceur' as 'gentleness' or 'softness'. See Sales François de, *Introduction à la vie dévote* (Paris: 1943) 320–323: 'Je dis donc que la dévotion ne consiste pas en la douceur, suavité, consolation et tendreté sensible du coeur, qui nous provoque aux larmes et soupirs, et nous donne une certaine satisfaction agréable et savoureuse en quelques exercices spirituels. [...] La dévotion donc ne gît pas en ces tendretés et sensibles affections, qui quelquefois procèdent de la nature, qui est ainsi molle et susceptible de l'impression qu'on lui veut donner, et quelquefois viennent de l'ennemi qui, pour nous amuser à cela, excite notre imagination à l'appréhension propre pour tels effets'.

³⁷ Teresa of Avila, *The Life of St Teresa of Avila, Including the Relations of her Spiritual State Written by Herself,* trans. D. Lewis, intro. D. Knowles (Westminster, MD: 1962) 73.

³⁸ See Iparraguirre I. (ed.), *Directoria exercitiorum spiritualium* (1540–1599) (Rome: 1955) 563–751 ("Directorium definitive approbatum" [1599]), at 607. Bellarmino Roberto, *De gemitu columbae sive de dono lacrymarum libri tres* (Antwerp, Balthasar Moretus: 1617) 12–13; Marchetti V., "La simulazione di santità nella riflessione medico-legale del sec. XVII", in Zarri G. (ed.), *Finzione e santità tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Turin: 1991) 202–227.

³⁹ Vieille V., Le Bienheureux Bernardin Realino de la Compagnie de Jésus (1530–1616) (Lille: 1896), 28–29.

China, cried his heart out as well, as did apparently several other pioneers of the order.⁴⁰ In his treatise on tears, *De gemitu columbae, sive de dono lacrymarum, libri tres* (1617), St. Roberto Bellarmino (1542–1621) made sure to point out that two early members of the order struck down in their youth, the Polish novice St. Stanislaus Kostka (1550–1568) and the Italian prince St. Luigi Gonzaga (1568–1591), had cried rivers of tears.⁴¹ St. Teresa of Avila herself, despite all her warnings to the contrary, was also convinced that God had given her the gift of crying: 'El señor me habia dado don de lágrimas'.⁴²

In the more immediate circles of Clement VIII, the founder of the Congregation of the Oratory, St. Philip Neri (1515–1595), also excelled in the art of crying. The stimulus to St. Philip's own outpourings, according to his biographer Giuseppe Crispino, was clear enough: time and again he would overdose on divine sweetness during prayer or mass and be lifted up to the most sublime of feelings.⁴³ Precisely because of these feelings, which were mercifully granted to him by the Holy Spirit, he was rarely able to hold back his tears of *dulcedo*.⁴⁴ Indeed, his crying was so intense on such occasions that people could regard it only as a miracle that he did not lose his eyesight in the process.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Bartoli Daniello, *Dell'Historia della Compagnia di Giesu l'Asia* (Genoa, Benedetto Guasco: 1656) 381–382.

⁴¹ Bellarmino, *De gemitu columbae* 7–8; Goetstouwers J., "La Vie de S. Stanislas Kostka par le P. Jean-Antoine Valtrino", *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 1 (1932) 254–275, at 266; Mezzadri L., "Alle origini di un tema barocco il *De Gemitu Columbae* di San Roberto Bellarmino", in *Dopo Sisto V: La Transizione al Barocco* (1590–1630). *Atti del convegno Dopo Sisto V: La Transizione al Barocco* (1590–1630), *Roma* 18–19–20 ottobre 1995 (Rome: 1997) 61–82, at 73.

⁴² Waldberg M. von, *Studien und Quellen zur Geschichte des Romans: Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der 'schönen Seele' bei den spanischen Mystikern*, Literaturhistorische Forschungen 41 (Berlin: 1910) 82–83.

⁴³ Crispino Giuseppe, La scuola del gran maestro di spirito S. Filippo Neri. Nella quale co' fatti, e co' detti del medesimo santo, e di alcuni suoi discepoli s'insegnano le pratiche della vita spirituale ad ogni stato di persone. Divisa in cinque libri [...] (Naples, G. Passaro: 1675) 288.

⁴⁴ Incisa della Rochetta G. – Vian N. (eds.), *Il primo processo per San Filippo Neri: Nel Codice Vaticano Latino 3798 e in altri esemplari dell'archivio dell'oratorio di Roma*, 4 vols. (Vatican City: 1957–1960), vol. I, 183. See also the testimony (Francesco della Molara, 7 August 1595), cited ibid. vol. I, 12: 'Et ho visto più volte il detto p. Filippo nel sermonegiare, che tutto tremava, et tremavano le sedie, et le predelle dove stava la sedia con pianto grande, che era tanto pieno di spirito, che non poteva parlare; et questo lo faceva ancora quando diceva la Messa et quando communicava, massime la s.ra marchesa Rangona [Giulia Orsini, vedova dal 1581 del modenese Baldassare Rangoni]'.

⁴⁵ *Il primo processo per San Filippo Neri*, vol. I, 183 (Antonio Gallonio, 7 September 1595): Era tanto il dono delle lachrime continuo, che è stato miracolo che non habbi perso la vista; non poteva applicarsi a cose de Iddio, che non piangesse; quando vedeva persone tentate

Another, rather less celebrated, lachrymist close to Clement VIII was the general of the Capuchin order, St. Lorenzo da Brindisi (1559–1619). It is hardly a coincidence that he, too, was eventually canonized. During the canonization process, there was frequent mention of the father's tearfulness. The latter had manifested itself mainly during masses, which often lasted several hours, when he cried more or less continuously ('nel celebrare piangeva quasi sempre').46 The powerful emotions and feelings of love, inner feelings of compassion and remorse, along with the sweetness of experiencing God – so it was said – had repeatedly activated Lorenzo's tear ducts.⁴⁷ People frequently noticed (and sometimes even portrayed) Lorenzo wiping away the teardrops with towels especially laid out for him for this purpose. In fact, witnesses called to testify at the canonization process were divided over how many fazzoletti the padre could moisten. Giovanni da Fossombrone, who frequently assisted the general during church service, not only recalled that Lorenzo possessed the gift of crying during mass ('haveva il dono delle lacrime nella Messa'), but that he kept a towel handy in the washbasin ('il fazzoletto del lavabo') to dry his deluge of emotion.⁴⁸ Remigio da Bozzolo claimed that it sometimes contained two towels ('bagnava alle volte due fazzoletti').49 In 1624, Brother Gianmaria da Monteforte testified that he had seen two or three ('alle volte bagnava 2 o 3 fazoletti').50 In a second statement made a few years

o ingannate, piangeva subito commovendoseli le viscere per compassione; et, cosi vechio, doi anni sono, li sentii dire una persona della qual dubitava non fosse in uno inganno: "per te", piangendo diceva, "mi farò anco discipline assai, così vechio come sono".

⁴⁶ Da Carmignano di Brenta A.M., *San Lorenzo da Brindisi dottore della chiesa universale* (1559–1619), Miscellanea Laurentiana IV, 4 vols. (Venezia-Mestre: 1960–1963), vol. IV/2, 285–288, at 286 ("1627–1628. – Deposizione di padre Daniele da Venezia. Dal P. A. Vic. ASV, Arch. Congr. SS. Rituum Proc. 374, parte II, fols. 61r–62r"): 'Et l'ho visto molte volte a celebrare, se ben non ascoltavo la sua Messa. Et nel celebrare piangeva quasi sempre, spargendo molte lacrime, di modo che bagnava sino due, tre e più fazzoletti'.

⁴⁷ Da Carmignano di Brenta, *San Lorenzo da Brindisi*, vol. I, ²⁰¹–205 ("L'eloquenza del pianto").

⁴⁸ Da Carmignano di Brenta, *San Lorenzo da Brindisi*, vol. IV/2, 227–232, at 229 ("1626–1628. – Deposizione di padre Giovanni da Fossombrone. Dal P. A. Gen. ASV, Arch. Congr. SS. Rituum Proc. 376, parte II, fols. 16r–17r").

⁴⁹ Da Carmignano di Brenta, *San Lorenzo da Brindisi*, vol. IV/2, 197–200, at 198 ("1624. – Deposizione di padre Remigio da Bozzolo. Dal P. D. Mon. Innsbruck, Arch. Prov. Cap., Fasc. X/8, 61–68"): '§ 11. Diceva la Messa con tanta divotione, singulti, e lagrime, e gridi, che tutti ch'erano in sacristia o altri luoghi vicini lo sentivano; et con tanto pianto, che bagnava alle volte due fazzoletti, che parevano che fossero stati messi nell'acqua [...]'.

 $^{^{50}}$ Da Carmignano di Brenta, San Lorenzo da Brindisi, vol. IV/2, 180–197, at 190 ("1624. – Deposizione di fra' Giammaria da Monteforte. Dal P. D. Mon. Innsbruck, Arch. Prov. Cap., Fasc. X/8, 1–52").

later (in 1628), however, he spoke of six ('ordinariamente io vi mettevo sei fazzoletti').⁵¹ And, at one point, there was even talk of seven, sometimes stained with blood as well.⁵² Whatever the exact number, all witnesses agreed that these towels were not just a little moist but soaking wet, as if they had been drenched in water ('in modo che pareva fussero tinti nell'acqua').⁵³ The duke of Mantua's sister, so legend had it, was even able to fill a small carafe when she wrung dry some of these sodden *fazzoletti* ('da quegli fazzoletti premuti hebbe una carafina piena delle lacrime del detto padre').⁵⁴

It can safely be assumed that Clement VIII modelled himself upon all these examples, and especially upon that of St. Philip Neri. Where the pope managed to surpass the great criers of his day by far was both in the sheer conspicuousness of his tears and in the degree of attention the papal *lacrime* garnered, not only in Rome but throughout the Catholic world. His exemplary lachrymosity influenced devotional behaviour both near and far. Poets devoted religious verse to Clement's outpourings, and later religious music honoured his sobs, which themselves had been audible from afar. One of the last poems composed by Torquato Tasso, *The Tears of the Blessed Virgin*, and the last great polyphonic work by Orlando di Lasso, entitled *The Tears of St. Peter*, were dedicated to the Aldobrandini family and the pope himself, and other artists soon followed in their footsteps. From 1600 on, biblical examples of liberating acts of crying became a worthy and ever more popular subject for painters and

⁵¹ Da Carmignano di Brenta, *San Lorenzo da Brindisi*, vol. IV/2, 326–344, at 337–338 ("1628–1629. – Deposizione di fra' Giammaria da Monteforte. Dal P. A. Mil. ASV, Arch. Congr. SS. Rituum Proc. 370, 731ff."): 'Le lagrime che spargeva nel celebrare la santa Messa, erano tante, che ordinariamente io vi mettevo sei fazzoletti; e, finita la Messa, restavano bagnati di lagrime e tutti inhumiditi'.

⁵² Da Carmignano di Brenta, *San Lorenzo da Brindisi*, vol. III/3, 429–434, at 432 n. 232 ("Rapimenti e lacrime"); da Carmignano di Brenta, *San Lorenzo da Brindisi*, vol. IV/2, 180–197, at 190 ("1624. – Deposizione di fra' Giammaria da Monteforte. Dal P. D. Mon. Innsbruck, Arch. Prov. Cap., Fasc. X/8, 1–52").

⁵³ Da Carmignano di Brenta, *San Lorenzo da Brindisi*, vol. IV,2, 256–266, at 261 ("1626–1628. – Deposizione di padre Filippo da Soragna. Dal P. A. Nap. ASV, Arch. Congr. SS. Rituum Proc. 379, fols. 112r ff.").

⁵⁴ Da Carmignano di Brenta, *San Lorenzo da Brindisi*, vol. III, 429–434, at 432 ("Rapimenti e lacrime"); da Carmignano di Brenta, *San Lorenzo da Brindisi*, vol. IV/2, 233–238, at 234–235 ("1626–1628. – Deposizione di padre Francesco Severino da Napoli. Dal P. A. Nap. ASV, Arch. Congr. SS. Rituum Proc. 379, fols. 44r ff.").

⁵⁵ Tonelli L., *Tasso* (Turin: s. a.) 318–319; Steinheuer J., "Poverello che farai? – Musik als Vehikel gegenreformatorischer Bestrebungen", *Zeitsprünge* 1 (1997) Heft 2/4, 602–626, at 610–611; Pastor L. von, *Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters* (Freiburg im Breisgau: 1893–1930), vol. XI, 639–640.

draughtsmen.⁵⁶ In addition to a remorseful-looking Mary Magdalene,⁵⁷ there were increasingly frequent portrayals of Peter, repenting for having thrice denied Jesus.⁵⁸

That the keyword *pianto* was absent from the first edition of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* of 1593, but included in the illustrated edition of 1603, is all the more indicative of the degree to which crying became conventionalized exactly during Clement VIII's pontificate.⁵⁹ Of no less significance is the fact that during the pope's lifetime people started to question the authenticity of his crying and assumed that Ippolito Aldobrandini was able to turn his tears on and off, turning on or off the waterworks so to speak.⁶⁰

Clement VIII's performative crying clearly illustrates how much emphasis the Church had now placed on personal feeling, elevating those inner emotions, which at the best of times flowed down from the fountain of God's mercy, to the status of a reliable and verifiable means of knowledge. Consequently, everyone - and this charge was levelled against Protestant determinism – was now called upon to seek the 'evidence of the non-evident' from and within his own body. 61 This had far-reaching consequences. During the Catholic Reformation crying in public became a widespread fashion. According to church historian Paul Maria Baumgarten, people cried, wailed and sobbed at 'each and every opportunity [...] and there was no difference between men and women in this regard. They cried singly or in packs; they cried together in the hundreds, even in the thousands'.62 Baumgarten's formulation is not an assertion conjured out of thin air but aptly describes a historical reality around 1600. Crying was simply part and parcel of religious life. Crying was the heartfelt language of God, a language of inner feelings that would burst out through

⁵⁶ Ripa Cesare, *Iconologia* (Rome, Faci: 1603) 400–401; Falke J. von, *Geschichte des Modernen Geschmacks* (Leipzig: 1880) 180–181.

⁵⁷ Lapide Cornelius a, *Commentaria in quatuor Evangelia* (Venice, Typographia Balleoniana: 1740) 515 A–C.

⁵⁸ Mormando F., "Teaching the Faithful to Fly: Mary Magdalene and Peter in Baroque Italy", in Id. (ed.), *Saints and Sinners: Caravaggio and the Baroque Image* (Chestnut Hill, MA: 1999) 107–135, at 116–120 ("The Penitent Magdalene"); 123–124 ("The Penitent Peter").

⁵⁹ Ripa, *Iconologia* 400–401.

⁶⁰ Baumgarten, Neue Kunde von alten Bibeln 15.

⁶¹ Schröder, Logos und List 255.

⁶² Baumgarten P.M., "Von der neuen Ausgabe der Constitutiones Societatis Jesu", Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 56 (1937) 399–423, at 408.

the eyes of the believer and disclose whatever was concealed. 63 Through tears, otherwise invisible emotions would surface and – in the most successful cases – materialize the crier's ability to taste the sweetness of God in the face of a public audience. 64

⁶³ Rodriguez Alfonso, *Exercitium de perfectione et virtutibus christianis* (Dillingen, Udalricus Rem: 1621), "Tractatus Quintus [De Oratione]", Cap. XII ("Momenti esse maximi in meditatione insistere actibus affectibusque voluntatis") 352–353.

⁶⁴ Ricci, *Instructio* 486–489, Pars III, Cap. V ("De lachrymis spiritualibus").

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PART FOUR THE SENSES CONTESTED

THE SENSE OF HEARING POLITICIZED: LITURGICAL POLYPHONY AND POLITICAL AMBITION IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FLORENCE*

Klaus Pietschmann

At first glance the presence of art music in the Roman liturgy seems to be as self-evident as that of precious artefacts in Christian churches. As a matter of fact, however, just as various iconoclasms radically questioned the often overwhelming presence of art in places of worship, the character and function of music during the rites was also an ardently discussed topic throughout the history of Christianity. The longue durée of this issue is reflected in the rather limited number of pro and contra arguments that governed such discussions over the centuries. On the one hand, the supporters of an elaborate and artistic musical practice, which involved not only the human voice but also various kinds of instruments, referred mainly to the invitation of Psalm 150 to praise the Lord 'with the sounding of the trumpet' and 'with the harp and lyre'. The idea of musical praise of God reached its climax in mystical views of the Mass. During the ceremony, the union of the Church triumphant and militant culminates in the Sanctus, when heaven seems to amalgamate with the church interior, and when the singing of the faithful becomes one with the eternal worship of the angels. This explains why the most elaborate forms of music should be applied to such a noble purpose. On the other hand, the critics of refined polyphonic church music underlined the role of singing as a means to convey religious messages, and hence the importance of the intelligibility of the words. This function was furthered especially in traditional chant, which had allegedly been introduced by the Church fathers Gregory and Ambrose. Their authority sanctioned the liturgical role of chant and thus became an additional argument against the introduction of other forms

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of music into the Roman rite.¹ Of course, the interests behind these arguments changed over the centuries. In fact, in any given context the shape of church music always tends to reflect the prevailing ecclesiastical and representational politics. For example, the lavishly ornamented early Parisian organum is clearly related to the sacralization of French kingship in the thirteenth century, and much later Mozart's sober, brief orchestral masses for Salzburg mirror the enlightened conception of the rule of Emperor Joseph II.

At the same time, this long-standing debate about church music was clearly subject to changing attitudes towards audible forms of embellishment of the holy Mass. Therefore the nature of the arguments used in different historical contexts may reveal crucial information about the role attributed to the sense of hearing in religious communities under certain local, social or ideological circumstances.² Fifteenth-century Florence provides one of the more famous examples in music history of a highly politicized debate on church music, and a remarkable emphasis on the role of the senses in the liturgy.³ Within this debate, the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola became one of the most fervent detractors of polyphonic liturgical music. In his Florentine sermon cycles of the 1490s he took up the subject of polyphony on various occasions, for example on 5 March 1496:

¹ On the role of music in Christian worship see for example McKinnon J., "Christian Antiquity", in idem (ed.), Antiquity and the Middle Ages: From Ancient Greece to the 15th Century, Man & Music 1 (Houndmills – London: 1990) 88–119; Fuhrmann W., Herz und Stimme: Innerlichkeit, Affekt und Gesang im Mittelalter (Kassel: 2004); Hammerstein R., Die Musik der Engel: Untersuchungen zur Musikanschauung des Mittelalters (Bern – Munich: 1962); Fellerer K.G., Geschichte der katholischen Kirchenmusik, 2 vols. (Kassel: 1972). On the critical voices in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance see especially Dalglish W., "The Origin of the Hocket", Journal of the American Musicological Society 31 (1978) 3–20; Wegman R.C., The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe, 1470–1530 (New York: 2008); Pietschmann K., Kirchenmusik zwischen Tradition und Reform: Die päpstliche Kapelle und ihr Repertoire unter Papst Paul III. (1534–1549), Capellae Apostolicae sixtinaeque collectanea acta monumenta 11 (Vatican City: 2007).

² Renaissance conceptions of the sense of hearing and their impact on the history of music have so far not been broadly investigated in musicological research. See for example Wegman R.C. (ed.), *Music as Heard: Listeners and Listening in Late-Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (1300–1600), special issue of *The Musical Quarterly* 82 (1998) 427–691; Blackburn B.J., "For Whom Do the Singers Sing?", *Early Music* 25 (1997) 593–609; Dean J., "Listening to Sacred Polyphony c. 1500", *Early Music* 25 (1997) 611–636; Knighton T., "Spaces and Contexts for Listening in 15th-Century Castile: The Case of the Constable's Palace in Jaén", *Early Music* 25 (1997) 661–677.

³ On the critiques in fifteenth-century Florence see especially Macey P., *Bonfire Songs: Savonarola's Musical Legacy* (Oxford: 1998) and Wegman, *Crisis of Music* 25–59 and passim.

God says: 'Take away your beautiful *canti figurati*'. These *signori* have chapels of singers who appear to be in a regular uproar (as the prophet says here), because there stands a singer with a big voice who appears to be a calf and the others cry out around him like dogs, and one cannot make out a word they are saying. Give up these *canti figurati*, and sing the plainchant ordained by the Church.⁴

Savonarola distinguishes between two practices of liturgical singing: on the one hand, the *canto figurato*, which means polyphonic music of high artistic standard; and on the other, the canto fermo, which refers to traditional Gregorian chant. His attacks were directed against the first sort, i.e. the musical practice that was favoured in many monasteries and by the political elites of the city because of its fine sonoric quality – a quality that was harshly condemned by the friar.⁵ In a broader discussion of religion and the senses in Renaissance Europe, this case seems especially remarkable because it reveals the enormous potential of a sense-based symbology for strategies of representation of political power. While the arguments of the critics of liturgical polyphony seem to be fairly consistent and have been studied various times, the question remains, however, on what grounds liturgical polyphony was held in such high esteem by the leading classes in spite of the objections raised against it. Musicological research has usually tended to accept the rich heritage of Renaissance church music as the logical result of an organic evolution, while neglecting the underlying intellectual and spiritual motivations.

The complex discourse and symbology behind the musical enrichment of the liturgy in the fifteenth century are the main subjects of the present study. Hitherto unconsidered theological writings on the quality and transformation of the senses in paradise, by authors such as Bartolomeo Rimbertini and Celso Maffei, offer a new perspective on the debates about, and the actual role of, polyphonic music in liturgical worship. The idea of a close relationship between the saints' abilities to sing and their position in the celestial hierarchy clearly mirrors the efforts of many European

⁴ 'Dice Dio: lieva via quelli tuoi belli canti figurati. Egli hanno questi signori le cappelle de' cantori che bene pare proprio uno tumulto (come dice qui el profeta), perché vi sta là un cantore con una voce grossa che pare un vitello e li altri gli cridono atorno come cani e non s'intende cosa che dichino. Lasciate andare e' canti figurati, e cantate e' canti fermi ordinati dalla Chiesa'. Savonarola G., *Prediche sopra Amos e Zaccaria*, ed. P. Ghiglieri, 3 vols. (Rome: 1971), vol. II, 23; translation: Macey, *Bonfire Songs* 97f.

⁵ See for an overview D'Accone F.A., "Sacred Music in Florence in Savonarola's Time", in Garfagnini G.C. (ed.), *Una città e il suo profeta: Firenze di fronte al Savonarola* (Florence: 2001) 311–354.

courts and religious institutions to have their liturgies enriched by lavishly composed and exquisitely sung polyphonic compositions instead of sober and ascetic Gregorian chant. The criticisms proclaimed by Girolamo Savonarola show his deep understanding of the political implications of this connection.

The first part of this contribution briefly describes the situation of church music in fifteenth-century Florence and characterizes the criticisms of polyphony among prominent Florentine Dominicans, starting with Giovanni de Caroli, whose views will be compared with Savonarola's argumentation. In the second part these positions are confronted with other Dominican authors, especially Archbishop Antoninus and his contemporary Bartolomeo de Rimbertini. I will then conclude by highlighting a contemporary of Savonarola, Celso Maffei, whose writings on the glorification of the senses in paradise offer the final key to an understanding of the political overtones of the Florentine debate about church music.

In the 1430s the guild of the cloth finishers and merchants in foreign cloth (Arte di Calimala) and the woolmakers' guild (Arte della Lana) started to finance a choir with prominent musicians to perform in the major Florentine churches, especially the cathedral, the baptistery and SS. Annunziata. The decision to establish these Cantori di San Giovanni – as the choir was usually called – was probably influenced by the about ten-year stay in the city of Eugene IV, who employed one of the foremost musical chapels of the time. This is the background of the famous motet *Nuper rosarum flores*, composed for the consecration of Santa Maria del Fiore in 1436 by the papal singer Guillaume Dufay, the eminent Franco-Flemish musician held in the highest artistic esteem all over Europe. Giannozzo Manetti's *Oratio* [...] *de* [...] *pompis in consecratione basilicae Florentinae habitis* gives an idea of the way in which a contemporary perceived this music:

Indeed, at the elevation of the consecrated host the temple resounded throughout with the sounds of harmonious symphonies [of voices] as well as the concords of diverse instruments, so that it seemed not without reason that the angels and the sounds and singing of divine paradise had been sent from heaven to us on earth to insinuate into our ears a certain incredible divine sweetness.⁷

⁶ D'Accone F.A., "The Singers of San Giovanni in Florence during the 15th Century", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 14 (1961) 307–358.

⁷ 'In cuius quidem sacratissimi corporis elevatione tantis armoniarum symphoniis / tantis insuper diversorum instrumentorum consonationibus omnia basilicae loca reso-

This account should not be taken too literally - a mere ten papal singers would not have been able to cause the described effect in a space as enormous as that formed by the intersection of the Florentine cathedral with Brunelleschi's just finished cupola – but the impression of 'divine sweetness' was surely intended by Dufay and probably felt by those who were close enough to hear something of the music. Of special interest is the sophisticated structure of Dufay's motet. To mention only its most striking feature, the four sections reflect in their rhythmical ratios the proportions of the temple of Solomon, which was also the ideal model for the cathedral.8 The 'divine' effect, then, was not only based on a pleasant sonority but also, and much more, on a refined, meaningful composition, in which the articulation of the words admittedly played a secondary role. Obviously the intention was to create a celestial soundscape that would contribute to the stylization of Florence as a city favoured by God. On the other hand, the plainchant propagated by Savonarola was not absent from this composition: the beginning of the Introitus of the mass *In dedicatione* ecclesiae – 'Terribilis est locus iste' – is repeatedly intoned by two voices in long note values. This quotation amidst the contrapuntal framework is not easy to identify, and indeed this was by no means the kind of chant practice that Savonarola intended.

The fundamental difference between the two ways of performing a religious text should by now be clear. In the first case it is the harmony, the brilliance of the voices, the authority of a certain composer that dominates the impression, while in the second the whole concentration is directed towards the words, and these are assumed to have an effect of their own even if the listener is not able to understand the meaning of the Latin text.

Frank D'Accone and others have convincingly argued that the driving force behind the musical initiatives of the guilds were the Medici. The family acted in evident competition with the Italian courts, which already earlier in the fifteenth century had started to establish similar

nabant: ut angelici ac prorsus divini paradisi sonitus cantusque demissi caelitus ad nos in terris divinum nescio quid ob incredibilem suavitatem quandam in aures nostras insusurrare non inmerito viderentur'. Žak S., "Der Quellenwert von Giannozzo Manettis Oratio über die Domweihe von Florenz 1436 für die Musikgeschichte", *Die Musikforschung* 40 (1987) 2–32. at 14.

⁸ On Dufay's motet see especially Wright C., "Dufay's Nuper rosarum flores, King Solomon's Temple, and the Veneration of the Virgin", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 47 (1994) 395–441.

musical institutions.⁹ Statements like Savonarola's therefore may have been affected not only by a general scepticism of Church reform circles towards liturgical polyphony, but also by the political disaffection of the republican party, which seems to have rejected sacred polyphony as an oligarchic symbol.

About thirty years before Savonarola started to attack this musical practice the Dominican friar Giovanni Caroli, a prominent figure at Santa Maria Novella, became ardently engaged in the reform of his order. 10 Occasionally he came into conflict with his superiors, and in the early 1460s he was even exiled to Lucca. After his return, however, he soon consolidated his position in Florence, taught at the Studio, and finally became prior of Santa Maria Novella in 1479. Even though he agreed with Savonarola in his judgements on the moral decay of his times, he became a radical opponent of the Frate, mainly because he rejected his prophetic messages. Among his writings are the Vitae fratrum Beatae Mariae Novellae, which he finished by about 1480. These biographies present seven fourteenth-century members of the convent and depict them as impeccable witnesses of a morally upright past. In the dedicatory letters to contemporary Florentines, which preface each of the biographies, these pictures are contrasted with complaints about the decadence of the present times. One of these letters, written in 1479 and addressed to a certain Roberto Boninsegni, harshly attacks current musical practices. Caroli criticizes the popular singing of the confraternities but admits that perhaps it might be praised to some extent 'if they did those things with good integrity and faith, and not for the pride of this world'. 11 By contrast, he condemns without any exception 'that which can be abundantly observed in many men of our city at the enormous gathering of the crowds, where they are accustomed to singing the prophetic psalms or the sacred hymns with figured (as they say) harmonies and consonances, flattering the ears of men, and appealing to the multitude with an empty food'. 12 He continues by underlining

⁹ D'Accone, "Singers of San Giovanni" 309.

¹⁰ On Caroli see especially Camporeale S.I., "Giovanni Caroli e le *Vitae Fratrum S.M. Novellae*: Umanesimo e crisi religiosa (1460–1480)", *Memorie Domenicane* n.s. 12 (1981) 141–267.

¹¹ '[...] si bona facerent integritate ac fide nec pro seculi fastu'. Quoted from Wegman R.C., *The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe, 1470–1530* (New York: 2008) 26. On the musical practice of Florentine confraternities see Macey, *Bonfire Songs* and Wilson B., *Music and Merchants: The Laudesi Companies of Republican Florence* (Oxford: 1992).

^{12 &#}x27;[...] id quod in nonnullis nostrae civitatis hominibus abunde observari ingenti multorum concursu videmus, ubi figuratis (ut aiunt) melodiis et consonantiis vel propheticos

the qualities of the devout, dignified and sanctioned chant which should be practised 'lest our mind should wander through pride and levity, rather than to flow and glide away, in that figured, frivolous, and feeble song'. The central quality of chant consists in its capacity to transmit the holy words of the liturgy, which as a consequence 'acquire a certain invisible power to draw in the souls of men and to inflame them with divine love'. In other words, a spiritual quality is attributed to the text alone, while music should act only as a mediator. Any direct sensorial impact of music, however, distracts the mind and leads the listener astray.

These words are shaped by the 'classic' arguments against polyphony mentioned above. They serve Caroli's purpose – of playing the present off against the glorious past – very well. As noted, liturgical polyphony was a quite recent phenomenon in Florence. Caroli was a close witness of this rising trend: he entered the community of Santa Maria Novella in 1442, that is one year before Eugene IV and his court left the convent. In the 1470s Lorenzo de' Medici had started to enlarge systematically the Cantori di San Giovanni, and in 1478 (only one year before Caroli wrote his verdict) the overseers of the cathedral had installed their own choir, obviously to compete with the well-established group kept by the Medici. ¹⁴ So Caroli's critique probably reflects this recent development ¹⁵ and must be seen in the context of his reform efforts; the latter were probably not informed by political motives.

About fifteen years later Girolamo Savonarola picked up Caroli's arguments and articulated them in different ways. It is not known whether he knew the *Vitae fratrum*, but (as Rob Wegman has recently shown) these kinds of criticism became more and more diffused all over Europe in the last decades of the fifteenth century. Savonarola first arrived at San Marco in 1482 and soon became the most fervent, eloquent critic of the moral depression of Florence and the Church in general. After the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1492 Savonarola contributed to the destabilisation of Medici rule and the establishment of a prophetic government.

psalmos vel divinos hymnos decantare consuescunt: auribus hominum blandientes et multitudinem inani illo allicientes cibo'. Quoted from Wegman, *Crisis of Music* 26.

¹³ '[...] vim quandam invisibilem optinent hominum animos alliciendi ac divinis amoribus inflammandi'. Quoted from Wegman, *Crisis of Music* 27.

¹⁴ D'Accone, "Singers of San Giovanni" 327-328.

¹⁵ This view is underlined by the absence of any references to music in Caroli's otherwise equally pessimistic *Liber dierum lucensium* written about fifteen years earlier.

¹⁶ Wegman, Crisis of Music.

Interestingly, it was not until this radicalization that he broached the issue of church music.¹⁷

Like Caroli, Savonarola stigmatized especially the sensuous quality of music, which he saw as a distraction of the mind. Instead he advocated the reintroduction of traditional chant:

The praises [laude] and divine offices of the Church were created so that God may always be praised. But today we have converted these divine praises into something secular, with music and songs that delight our sense and ear but not our spirit; and this is not to the honour of God. Even though these songs may be sweet to the ears, nevertheless they do not restrain the soul, nor do they contain it within the enjoyment of divine things, and thus it is necessary to return to that original simplicity. And they should say the offices without so much singing, but only with devotion and with little inflection of the voice and with simplicity. ¹⁸

This point, which recurs – in several variants – also in other sermons,¹⁹ converges perfectly with the aforementioned criticisms. But then Savonarola continues: 'I tell you that these songs of yours today have been invented by ambition and avarice'.²⁰ This conclusion, at first glance, does not seem logical. Surely Savonarola could argue that the engagement of highly paid prominent musicians flowed from the ambitions of the leading classes in Florence; and, as was evident in the example cited at the beginning, he explicitly made this point. Even more emphatically he mentioned it in another context:

The tyrant sometimes maintains in church, not for the honour of God but for his own pleasure, inebriated singers who – their bellies filled with plenty of wine – come to sing the Mass to Christ; and then he pays them with funds from the commune.²¹

¹⁷ Perhaps the reason was his respect for Lorenzo's well-known musical affections, but even during his long activity in Ferrara he did not comment on the musical practices of the court chapel, which was among the most famous in Europe.

^{18 &#}x27;Acciò che Dio sia sempre laudato, sono poste le laude e gli officii divini nella Chiesa. Ma noi oggidì abbiamo convertite queste laude divine in cose seculari e in musiche e canti che delettino el senso e l'orecchio e non lo spirito; e questo non è onore di Dio; e benchè questi canti siano dolci agli orecchi, tamen non infrenano l'anima, nè la tengano infrenata al gusto delle cose divine, e però sarebbe di bisogno tornare a quella prima simplicità e che si dicessino gli officii sanza tanti cantamenti, ma solo con devozione e con poca flessione di voce e semplicemente', Savonarola G., Prediche sopra Aggeo, ed. L. Firpo (Rome: 1965) 115; translation: Macey, Bonfire Songs 93.

¹⁹ An overview is given in Macey, *Bonfire Songs* 91–98.

²⁰ 'Io ti dico che questi vostri canti d'oggi sono stati trovati da ambizione e avarizia', Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo* 115; translation: Macey, *Bonfire Songs* 93.

²¹ 'Praeterea il tiranno tiene nelle chiese alcuna volta, non per onore di Dio ma per suo piacere, cantori imbriaconi che, come sono ben pieni di vino, vanno a cantare la messa a

These arguments are easily applicable to the costly maintenance of the singers, but they do not seem to apply to the presumed *avarizia* and *ambitione* which Savonarola attributes to the practice of polyphony itself. So on what grounds did Savonarola stigmatize the sheer practice of polyphony not only as frivolous, but also as avaritious and ambitious?

Before answering this question it should be emphasized that in their views of music Savonarola and Caroli were rather isolated within their order. Other Florentine Dominican writers of the previous decades either did not touch on the topic of music at all or showed a rather benevolent attitude. To the first group belonged friars like Hieronymus Iohannis de Florentia from Santa Maria Novella, who was active in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, and Simone de Berti from San Marco, who later passed to Santa Maria Novella and was a direct contemporary of Giovanni Caroli. Their sermons, which are preserved in a handful of mostly Florentine sources, condemn many vices of their Florentine compatriots, like luxury, sodomy, and political ambition, but they do not make any mention of music.²²

Other Dominican authors explicitly accepted liturgical polyphony. The most prominent of them, the Florentine archbishop Antonino Pierozzi (1389–1459), in his *Summa Moralis* permits polyphonic music (he calls it biscantus), although he could not identify a founding authority and was critical of its sensuous appeal:

Chant has been instituted in the divine offices by holy doctors such as Gregory the Great, St. Ambrose, and others. I do not know who was the first to introduce biscantus into the ecclesiastical offices: it seems that it serves the titillation of the ears rather than devotion, although a pious mind may reap profit even from hearing this [music]. However, those who persist in such practices should see to it that 'the right life not be neglected while the alluring voice is sought after, and that he will not anger God while he pleases the people with his singing', as St. Gregory says.²³

Cristo, e pagali delli danari del commune'. Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Amos* 222; translation: Macey, *Bonfire Songs* 97.

²² Simone Berti's sermons are preserved in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS J. 4. 10; Hieronymus Iohannis de Florentia's *Quadragesimale Rotimata* in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS B. 8. 1514, fols. 1–112.

 $^{^{23}}$ 'Et cantus quidem firmus in divinis officiis a sanctis doctoribus institutus est ut Gregorio magno et Ambrosio et aliis. Biscantus autem in officiis ecclesiasticis quis adinvenerit ignoro. Pruritui aurium videtur magis deservire quam devotioni, quamvis pia mens etiam in his fructum referat audiendo. Qui tamen huic operi insistent, videant ne dum blanda vox queritur congrua vita negligatur et deum irritet contra se dum populum delectat, ut ait Gregorius'. Antoninus, Summa, Pars Tertia, Lib. III Tit. 13 Cap. IV § IX; translation: Wegman, $Crisis\ of\ Music\ 18$.

Although Antoninus shares Savonarola's criticism and characterizes polyphony as an outward sensory attraction, nevertheless he is distinct from him by not condemning the place of polyphony in liturgical worship. Even less reserved appears to be Bartolomeo de Rimbertini, a direct contemporary of Pierozzi.²⁴ After his profession in Santa Maria Novella in 1417 he made a brilliant career: he became bishop of Cortona in 1439 and subsequently undertook various papal missions to Greece and Scandinavia, before he died in 1466 in the Florentine convent of San Marco. In his hitherto largely unstudied Tractatus de glorificatione sensuum in paradiso Rimbertini discusses the properties of the five senses as experienced by the blessed in paradise. The text stands in a long tradition, which only intensified during the Renaissance, especially in the context of a new humanist aristotelianism. Here I will focus only on one crucial element that Rimbertini contributes to our question. One section of the treatise considers the 'septiformis reformatio audibilis in patria', the seven-fold reformation of the sense of hearing in paradise. These 'reformations' concern, for example, the capacity of hearing, speaking and singing, which in heaven is free of any earthly constraint. Most interesting for our purposes is the sixth reformation, which has to do with the 'consonantia armonica'. After citing various authorities who attest to the musical capacities of the saints and biblical figures like King David, Rimbertini draws the following conclusion:

Therefore the *beati* are more skilled than Pythagoras, Boethius and all musicians in applying consonances, breaking up notes into small values, singing coloraturas, and so forth. Therefore, given the agility of the bodies of the blessed, which will make their tongues and organs voluble; given the ideal disposition of their organs; given their perfect knowledge of the musical art; and given their great and most intense desire to praise God and inversely to implore him – who then has any doubt that they produce the sweetest harmony there? 25

The choice of words clearly suggests that Rimbertini's *beati* sing in polyphony. Of course it is true that his text describes an idealized situation in

²⁴ Cf. Kaeppeli T., "Bartholomaeus Lapaccius de Rimbertinis 1404–1466", *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 9 (1939) 86–127.

²⁵ 'Unde [beati] scient melius quam Pictagoras, Boetius, et omnes musici consonantias, fracturas vocum et coloraturas, et ista omnia. Unde data agilitate corporum beatorum que faciet linguam et organa expedita; et data organorum optima dispositione; et data perfecta scientia artis musice; et dato amore magno et intensissimo deum laudandi et se invicem exorandi: quis dubitet armoniam ibi esse dulcissimam'. Rimbertinus, *De deliciis sensibilibus*, fol. 33r.

the hereafter, but the implications of this vision for the here and now are obvious. If the *beati* praise and implore God with consonances and polyphonic singing, this may be done also by human beings during their liturgical rites, insofar as the latter represent the closest earthly approximation of heaven, and it seems clear that this concept is strongly related to the long tradition of spiritual practices which tended – in the words of Peter of Ailly – 'to reach already in this life the pleasures of the eternal rewards in an experiential way, and to taste their sweetness with delight'.²⁶

Rimbertini's text was known in San Marco, since one of its more prominent members in the second half of the fifteenth century, Leonardo di Ser Uberti, copied it for the library.²⁷ Later it appeared also in two printed editions in Venice and Paris, while Antoninus' *Summa Moralis* was published even more frequently and diffused all over Europe. Hence it becomes clear that Savonarola stood quite alone in Florence and in his order with his harsh condemnation of polyphonic music, based on sensory arguments; and no doubt he was aware of it.

This isolation probably led him to the additional accusation we have already mentioned, namely that church polyphony was avaritious and ambitious. It was a new charge, which no one had brought up in the earlier discussions about church music. As noted above, it is difficult to understand how Savonarola could associate *avaritia* and *ambitio* with the practice of polyphonic singing, beyond their connection to the maintenance of an expensive choir. A possible explanation for this second line of argument is suggested by another sermon, where he links the celestial hierarchy to the political situation in the city. Addressing Florence allegorically he says:

I have told you that citizens should not try to be the first or superior to the others, but rather stay quiet, everybody in his place and rank, like - as I told you - the angels and the saints in heaven, who stand in the places given them by God, without going beyond. By imitating them you would be a well-organized city similar to heaven. 28

²⁶ '[...] divinas aeternorum praemiorum delectationes jam quodammodo experimentaliter attingere et eorum suavitatem delectabiliter sapere'. Quoted from Largier N., "Inner Senses – Outer Senses: The Practice of Emotions in Medieval Mysticism", in Jaeger C.S. – Kasten I. (eds.), *Codierungen von Emotionen im Mittelalter*, Trends in Medieval Philology 1 (Berlin-New York: 2003) 3–15, at 8; see also Imorde J., *Affektübertragung* (Berlin: 2004) 59–78.

²⁷ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS J.7.46.

²⁸ 'Hotti detto che nessuno cittadino debbi cercare d'esser primo nè superiore agli altri, ma stare quieto, ognuno al grado e termine suo, come t'ho detto qui di sopra che stanno

The first step to achieve this reformed order should regard the restoration of the ecclesiastical rites and particularly the abolition of polyphonic music:

But first of all you should take care that the city becomes sanctified and the liturgy blameless, so you should take away all superfluity and the *canti figurati*, which are full of lasciviousness, and everything should be done with simplicity and devotion.²⁹

Savonarola assumes that there exists a direct relationship between purified, devout liturgical worship (without polyphony) and a well-ordered civic community reflecting the celestial hierarchy. This nexus is crucial and seems to relate directly to another element of the discourse on the senses in paradise. As I mentioned before, the Dominican Rimbertini attributes to the blessed the capacity of singing perfectly in the most elaborate polyphony conceivable. Some decades later, contemporaneously to Savonarola's statements, the regular canon of San Giovanni in Laterano Celso Maffei, who belonged to the wider Medicean intellectual orbit, goes even a step further.³⁰ In his *Delitiosa explicatio de sensibilibus deliciis paradisi* ('Delightful explanation of the sensuous pleasures of paradise') he affirms like Rimbertini:

It must be noted that the saints in the future state have a better understanding of the proportions of voices and sounds with respect to the musical art than anybody in this world. Similarly they can execute the breaking of voices most perfectly and have more capable voices than other musicians.³¹

But then he continues by assuming that this capacity is differentiated within the celestial hierarchy:

By a rough estimate, the sweetness of the voices and sounds that will resound in the glory [of heaven] will exceed all sweetness of this life about

gli angeli e li beati in Paradiso, ciascuno a' termini suoi che Dio gli ha dati, e non cercano più in là; a questo modo saresti città ordinata come la celeste'. Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo* 416–417.

²⁹ 'E però tu doveresti in prima provedere che nella città tua fusse santo e buono el culto divino e levar via le superfluità e li canti figurati, che sono pieni di lascivia, e che ogni cosa fusse con semplicità e devozione'. Ibid. 417.

³⁰ On Celso Maffei see Widloecher N., *La Congregazione dei canonici regolari lateranensi: Periodo di formazione (1402–1483)* (Gubbio: 1929); McDannell C. – Lang B., *Heaven: A History* (New Haven: 2001).

³¹ Tenendum est quod sancti in futuro statu melius scient proportiones vocum et sonorum secundum artem musicae quam aliquis in hoc mundo. Similiter scient fractiones vocum optime peragere et habebunt organa aptiora quam aliqui musici'. Maffei, *Delitiosam explicationem*, no foliation.

five hundred times. But in some saints it will be one hundred times only; in some others one thousand times; in yet others more than a thousand times; and so forth. $[\ldots]$ Inasmuch as one saint will rank higher than another in his sense of hearing, the sweetness of the audible object [he produces] will be proportionately greater, just as it will be smaller in its effect – that is, in the pleasure it provokes – in a less deserving saint.³²

In other words, the celestial hierarchy is mirrored in the gradations of sensory expression and experience of the saints. Similar to Rimbertini's conception, Maffei's view can easily be projected onto the Christian liturgy. In this case, however, not only is the use of polyphony legitimized by analogy, but its sensory effects are tied to the hierarchy of merit of those who produce, appreciate and foster these exquisite sounds. Consequently, the quality of church music becomes a direct indicator of the proximity to God. Read against this background, Giannozzo Manetti's description of the consecration of Santa Maria del Fiore suggests a similar ideology, according to which the sonorous quality of the music performed at that occasion, and its effect on the audience, become evidence that Medicean Florence is a city of the elect. Likewise, having an outstanding group of singers was not a mere status symbol to compete outwardly with the other Italian courts, but an audible proof of the often claimed equality or even superiority of the Medici to these courts. This equality was to become a political reality only in the 1530s, but the claim was articulated long before in various ways. Arguments like those of Maffei (and probably other writers still to be identified) suggest the context in which we should explain Medici efforts at creating celestial soundscapes in the churches of Florence.

In my hypothesis it was especially the implied link between the sensuous quality of church music and the celestial hierarchy that infuriated Savonarola and led him to attack liturgical polyphony so ardently. The sensuous quality in itself was not the crucial point, because, as St. Antoninus had put it, 'a pious mind may profit even from hearing this music'. The point was rather about what people had made out of it: based on spurious theological arguments they constructed a direct link between the sensations in paradise and an outstanding spiritual and political rank

³² 'Suavitas vocum et sonorum, quae erit in gloria, excedet secundum grossam extimationem saltem quinquagesies omnem suavitatem cantus huius vitae. Sed in quibusdam sanctis erit centies tanta. Et in quibusdam milesies. Et in aliquibus plusque milesies tanta etc. [...] Quia ergo unus sanctus secundum auditum magis meruit quam alter ideo secundum hoc suavitas obiecti audibilis erit in ordine ad ipsum maior: Et minor in alio qui minus meruit secundum effectum scilicet delectationis'. Ibid.

on earth - a link mirrored by a musical practice that claimed to echo the sensuous effects reserved to the *beati* in paradise and which at the same time was condemned by church reformers.

On these grounds it becomes clear how Savonarola could characterize polyphony as avaritious and ambitious. Since the early-fifteenth century the concepts of *avaritia* – traditionally among the cardinal sins – and *ambitio* had been converted by authors like Poggio Bracciolini and Lorenzo Ridolfi into positive qualities and indispensable principles of public prosperity and welfare.³³ This view was shared by the majority of the Florentine political elite: it endorsed the conviction of the abovementioned hierarchical rank of Florence as a city favoured by God. Needless to say, Savonarola, based on biblical arguments, rejected these views in the same manner as he refuted the ceremonial consequences drawn from them. In his eyes the political motivation of liturgical polyphony was closely connected with the abominable perversion of a cardinal sin into a well-respected economic virtue.

Savonarola succeeded to a certain extent in reforming the musical practices in Florence. After Lorenzo's death Piero de' Medici soon decided to dismiss the Cantori di San Giovanni. But this 'purification' of the rites did not last very long. Shortly after the friar's execution the choir was reestablished. Apart from all political presumption, at the turn of the sixteenth century polyphonic church music had become a representational requisite that a self-confident political centre could no longer do without. Nevertheless other reformers, like Calvin and Zwingli, came to question artistic church music on similar grounds as Savonarola had done, and it was only after the controversial debates during the Council of Trent that its position in the Roman Church became permanently stable.

³³ On Poggio Bracciolini's *De avaritia* (1428) see Proulx Lang A., *Poggio Bracciolini's De Avaritia: A Study in Fifteenth Century Florentine Attitudes Toward Avarice and Usury* (MA Thesis Univ. Montreal: 1973); on Lorenzo Ridolfi's *Tractatus de usuris* (1402–1404) see Armstrong L., *Usury and Public Debt in Early Renaissance Florence: Lorenzo Ridolfi on the Monte Comune* (Toronto: 2003).

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OF EELS AND PEARS: A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY DEBATE ON TASTE, TEMPERANCE, AND THE PLEASURES OF THE SENSES

Laura Giannetti

Abundance and dearth, gluttony and fast are unsurprising dichotomies, often juxtaposed one to the other, and that is certainly the case in the history and literature of sixteenth-century Italy. The availability of unlimited quantities of food, as in the dreams of the Land of Cockaigne or in the Boccaccian world of Bengodi, seems to be a literary and artistic response to the fear of dearth and famine. The actual dearth and famines that periodically plagued Italy in that era might account also for the literary representation of constantly hungry peasants and servants in comedy and epic poems. But the cultural conversation is much more complicated and not limited to such simple contrasts. Other players enter the game: doctors who prescribe the right diet for perfect health, humanists who worry that a wrong diet can jeopardize their intellectual performances, preachers and fathers of the Church who condemn altogether any desire for food and warn against the sin of gluttony, cooks who want to please their patrons even on fast days and the ruling families of Italy for whom the display of luxury food is foremost a sign of their power and status. For each of these groups the perception of food could be quite different, turning on issues of culture, status, values and sensory experience. In this essay, rather than considering all these issues, I propose to start an analysis of this complex cultural process by charting the 'decline' of the sin of gluttony and the negative perception of the pleasures of food against the rise of a positive vision of taste; as a result, food was understood to exist in a complex relationship with the body that involved morality, discipline, pleasure and celebration.1

¹ This article is part of a longer chapter in my book in progress on "Food Culture and the Literary Imagination in Early Modern Italy". In earlier and different versions this article was presented at the meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in Venice (8 April 2010) and at the Center for the Humanities of the University of Miami (22 April 2010). The author would like to thank Wietse de Boer, who co-organized (with Christine Göttler and Herman Roodenburg) a series of panels for the 2010 RSA meeting on "Religion and the Senses" in which an earlier and shorter version of this article was first presented. All translations unless otherwise noted are mine.

A good place to begin the study of the changing role of sense perception, in particular taste, in the early modern period is the mid-fifteenth century gastronomic treatise *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* by the humanist Bartolomeo Sacchi, better known as Platina. In the eighth section of the book – dedicated to enhancing or restoring appetite in people who have been ill or too tired to eat – there appears an elaborate recipe for 'eel pie'. The instructions call for cutting the eels in pieces, rolling them in flaky pastry, adding raisins, figs and several spices, including saffron, cinnamon, ginger and pepper; sprinkling everything with rose water and sugar, layering the ingredients and then deep-frying the preparation. At the end the recipe adds an innocent bit of advice: 'When the eel pie is finally ready, serve it to your enemies because it has nothing good in it'.² This distasteful eel pie, however, was not the only unpleasant concoction proposed by Platina; the very next recipe for fish rolls has a similar warning.³

What was wrong with these dishes, it appears, was that for Platina they tasted bad. Yet eels were seen by many as a particularly rich and tasty food. They were quite popular because they could survive out of water for days and be transported easily; and in fact, other sixteenth-century cookbooks give many recipes for preparing them.⁴ Platina himself in a different section of his treatise provides other, much simpler recipes for *anguille* that can be grilled, roasted and boiled.⁵ In prescriptive food literature, however, eels enjoyed a mixed reputation; some authors argued that they were to be avoided for health and moral reasons. Michele Savonarola, a medical doctor at the Este court in the fifteenth century and author of two food treatises, associates eels with gluttonous abbots because they were in his opinion a 'food for gluttonous people, pleasant-tasting and agreeable',⁶ and other authors list eels as a food typical of the gluttonous courtier.⁷ But Leonardo da Vinci put grilled eels on the table of the *Last Supper* and had no problem with that, probably because – as has recently been

 $^{^2\,}$ Platina, On Right Pleasures and Good Health, ed. M.E. Milham (Tempe, AZ: 1998) 8.42, 373–374-

³ Platina, On Right Pleasures 8.52, 381.

⁴ Platina reports the general opinion that eels could live for eighty years and survive out of the water for six days (10.4, 425). On eels and their popularity in sixteenth-century Italy, see Varriano J., *Tastes and Temptations: Food and Art in Renaissance Italy* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: 2009) 104. The belief about eels existed since medieval times: Montanari M., *La fame e l'abbondanza: Storia dell'alimentazione in Europa*, 4th ed. (Rome – Bari: 2003) 101.

⁵ Platina, On Right Pleasures 10.4, 425.

⁶ 'cibus gulosorum, gustui amenus et suavis': Savonarola Giovanni Michele, *Practica Maior* (Venice, Vincentius Valgrisius: 1560), fol. 31v.

⁷ Albala K., *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: 2002) 206.

hypothesized – he saw them served at the home of his Milanese patron, Ludovico Sforza.⁸ The eel example is interesting, because it suggests how the perception of a certain food could easily and completely differ from one context to another. More important yet, it turns on something relatively new and unexplored in the dietary literature of Platina's day – the pleasure of eating, or in this case the lack of same, and the importance of the sense of taste. The association between good health and the consumption of certain foods was well known already in Greek and Arabic treatises, but Platina gave it a new meaning, adding to the picture the importance of pleasure in eating. Critics agree that the most interesting novelty in Platina's work was exactly this, the 'invention' of a philosophy of taste.⁹

As appears clearly in the example of these recipes, sense perception and, in this case, taste are strongly tied to a specific cultural and historical context rather than merely to biology or premodern 'science'. In early modern Europe and Italy the contemporary notion of the five senses derived from Aristotelian philosophy; it maintained that the senses stood on a hierarchical ladder where each sense corresponded to one of the elements of the universe. In the official taxonomy of the senses in prescriptive literature, sight and hearing occupied the highest places as spiritual senses, while touch, smell and taste, considered to be animal and material senses, stood at the bottom. Literary and artistic representations of the senses often did not follow this hierarchy, and in particular taste and touch acquired a higher position over time. A text such as

⁸ Varriano, Tastes and Temptations 102–104.

⁹ Freedman P. (ed.), Food: The History of Taste (Berkeley – Los Angeles: 2007) 199. See also Ballerini L., "Introduction: Maestro Martino the Carneades of Cooks", in The Art of Cooking: The First Modern Cookery Books Composed by the Eminent Maestro Martino da Como, a Most Prudent Expert in This Art, Once Cook to the Most Reverend Cardinal Trevisan, Patriarch of Aquileia, ed. and intr. L. Ballerini, trans. and annot. J. Parzen, with fifty modernized recipes by S. Barzini (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: 2005) 10–11. On the multiple translations of Platina's work and the circulation of new ideas about taste see Tomasik T.J., "Translating Taste in the Vernacular Editions of Platina's De Honesta Voluptate et Valeudine", in Tomasik T.J. – Vitullo J. (eds.), At the Table: Metaphorical and Material Cultures of Food in Medieval and Early Modern Europe (Turnhout: 2007) 189–210.

¹⁰ However, some authors of medieval philosophy have argued that only the sense of taste was able to reveal the essence of things, as for example the anonymous *Summa de saporibus*, a thirteenth-century manuscript. See Burnett C., "The Superiority of Taste", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 54 (1991) 230–238. See also the discussion in Montanari M., "Sapore e sapere: Il senso del gusto come strumento di conoscenza", in Ghelli F. (ed.), *I cinque sensi (per tacer del sesto): Atti della Scuola Europea di studi comparati, Bertinoro, 28 agosto/4 settembre 2005* (Florence: 2007) 71–78.

De honesta voluptate, which enjoyed an immediate and vast success in Italy and Europe, evidenced by multiple reprints in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, is a good indicator of the revolution taking place in the 'official' taxonomy of the senses¹¹ – a revolution that in some way continues in the present with taste being highly valued and a fashionable object of study. This 'revolution', however, was neither simple nor easy. Platina, an accomplished and cosmopolitan humanist, was harshly criticized in his day and later for writing a gastronomic treatise that earned him the label of 'glutton' and 'writer for epicures'. Nonetheless many later followed his lead, embracing the principle that what was delicious and thus rewarded the sense of taste was also good for health.

But as food historian Massimo Montanari has suggested, this so-called 'utopia' of the sense of taste coexisted and clashed with a significant tradition that could be traced back at least to the Fathers of the Church. This tradition taught the opposite: what tastes good cannot be good, because the corporeal pleasures of food take human beings away from the higher senses and the true life of the spirit. One of the most famous examples of the condemnation of the pleasures of eating in fifteenth-century Italy is in St. Bernardino's Lenten sermons, where gluttony is linked to lust and sodomy. In one particular sermon written in 1534 St. Bernardino describes the desire of Florentine youths for partridges and capons, as well as nut pastries and marzipan, as leading them to a corrupting life of sexual pleasures. The link between the consumption of meat and sweets and unruly sexuality is presented as a given: 'If you lose wisdom about spiritual things,

¹¹ The *De honesta voluptate* was written sometime before 1464. After the *editio princeps* (about 1470, according to Mary Ella Milham in her "Introduction" to Platina, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health* 25) it enjoyed a series of reprints in its original language up to the mid-sixteenth century. It was also soon translated into Italian and the other major languages of Europe, making it 'the first best seller in cookery book history' (Ballerini, "Introduction" 14).

¹² Ballerini L., "Introduction" 12–13. Girolamo Cardano in presenting his book *De usu ciborum* reassures his readers: 'Non quemadmodum fecit Platina, qui libellum de honesta voluptate inscripsit, potius ad usum culinarum et voluptatem heluonum, qui popinis tantum indulgent, atque gulae [...]' ('I will not do as Platina did, who authored a little book on honest pleasure more to be used for culinary pleasure by the gluttonous who so greatly want to enjoy taverns and their palate [...]'). Quoted in Albala, *Eating Right* 261.

¹³ Montanari, "Sapore e sapere: Il senso del gusto come strumento di conoscenza" 77.

¹⁴ Bernardino da Siena, *Le prediche volgari*, ed. C. Cannarozzi, 2 vols. (Florence: 1934), vol. II, 45–46. Quoted in Vitullo J., "Taste and Temptation in Early Modern Italy", *The Senses and Society* 5 (2010) 106–118, at 106.

you lose wisdom about temporal things'. 15 The saint's preaching against the wealthy Florentines represents the extreme side of a widespread religious condemnation of culinary pleasures and the sense of taste. The regular religious prescriptions about food centred on the prohibition of meat and on the practice of fasting for everybody as ways of mortifying the body and controlling its appetites. 'Lenten days' (qiorni di magro in Italian) and 'fat days' alternated on the liturgical calendar and on the table. To match the seasonal calendar with the religious calendar was a complicated business that involved substitutions and adaptations but also contributed to the diffusion of certain aliments: olive oil or butter took the place of lard, and fish was prepared instead of meat.¹⁶ Famous cooks such as Maestro Martino da Como learned how to deal with a quadragesimal diet inventing several 'Lenten imitation' foods using almonds, fish and fish stock to prepare faux ricotta and eggs.¹⁷ Recipe books with suggestions for the two regimes continued to be published well into the seventeenth century but their attitude changed: in the Scalco alla moderna by Antonio Latini fish is presented as a refined food perfect to satisfy the most exigent palate. Only in the introduction to the second volume of his work, in a sort of homage to a lengthy tradition, Latini notes the added benefit of fish, a food that it is also healthy for the spirit.¹⁸

The dietetic literature that flourished in early modern Italy and Europe complicates the picture further. Many authors seemed more interested in discussing what types of food were good for health, how food should conform to social class and the humoral composition of the body, or how one should adapt it to the seasons and to the place where one lived. In the end, the main purpose of dietetic literature was the achievement of good health while the importance of taste and pleasure in eating was overlooked. A rough consensus appears to have been reached in the

¹⁵ Ibid. 106. Fowl, especially partridges and capons, were believed to arouse lust because they were seen as hot and moist. For this see Grieco A.J., "From Roosters to Cocks: Italian Renaissance Fowl and Sexuality", in Matthews-Grieco S. (ed.), *Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy* (Burlington, VT: 2010) 89–140, especially 116–117.

¹⁶ Capatti A. – Montanari M., *La cucina in Italia: Storia di una cultura* (Rome – Bari: 2002) 82–87.

¹⁷ Parzan J., "Please Play with Your Food: An Incomplete Survey of Culinary Wonders in Italian Renaissance Cookery", *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture* 4 (2004) 25–33, at 29.

¹⁸ Capatti – Montanari, *La cucina italiana* 87. Latini Antonio, *Lo scalco alla moderna, overo l'arte di ben disporre i conviti*, 2 vols. (Naples, Parrino e Mutii: 1692–1694), vol. II, 1–3.

mid-seventeenth century: the most healthy diet was one based on moderation and frugality; the sense of taste was no longer important in choosing food. In fact, the sensual pleasure of taste was to be shunned. As has been argued, this 'change of mood' directed toward a strict control of the body and its appetites probably had some connection with Christian reform both Protestant and Catholic, even though only a few theorists make explicit references to religion in their writings. Yet while this 'civilization of appetites' was occurring in society, artistic representations and imaginative literature at much the same time went in the opposite direction, expressing an increasing fascination with the pleasure of food, the exaltation of taste and the reversal of the old hierarchy of the senses. 20

Perhaps the best place to start is the *Decameron* by Giovanni Boccaccio.²¹ In the Introduction to the Third Day, the *brigata* of the ten narrators, looking for the perfect setting to continue their narrative journey, explore the hills around Settignano above Florence and finally find their earthly paradise. The landscape of rivers of pure water, green plants, birds singing and perfumed flowers is a hymn to the senses. In this paradise, ironically, the brigata delights in a story about finding paradise through penitence and mortification of the senses.²² Puccio di Ranieri, an old and religious man married to the young and beautiful Isabetta, has decided to become a 'beato' and seeks the advice of his friend Dom Felice, who is in love with Isabetta. Eager to have the opportunity to enjoy Isabetta without the presence of her husband, Dom Felice tells Frate Puccio to repent his sins, abstain from food and sex, and spend his nights outdoors tied to a piece of wood emulating the crucifixion. While Puccio punishes his body in order to gain paradise, Isabetta and Dom Felice find their paradise on earth with delicious food and excellent wine accompanying and enhancing the sensual pleasures of their lovemaking. The moral of the novella underlines the fact that spiritual penance and mortification of the senses do not necessarily lead foolish and sexually ineffective husbands to paradise, whereas the sensual pleasures of sex and food do. The last novella of the Second Day had already introduced the theme with the story of the old judge Riccardo da Chinzica, married to the young and beautiful

¹⁹ Albala, Eating Right 177.

 $^{^{20}}$ With the phrase 'civilization of appetites' I am recalling the work of Norbert Elias and Georges Lefebvre and their analysis of the 'civilizing process' and internalization of specific norms of behaviour.

²¹ Boccaccio Giovanni, *Decameron*, ed. V. Branca, 2 vols. (Turin: 1980).

²² The novella is the fourth told on that day.

Bartolomea, who had chosen a life of prayer, sexual abstinence and fasting over satisfying his youthful wife. When Bartolomea is kidnapped by the pirate Paganino, she is happily introduced to the pleasures of the senses and realizes what she has missed with her husband. When the old judge shows up to reclaim her, she tells him that he can keep his prayers and fasting because she has already found paradise on earth with her aptly named Paganino.

Two centuries later, the theme of the earthly paradise as a place where all the senses are pleasurably engaged emerges in several works of the Venetian dramatist and actor Angelo Beolco, better known as Ruzante. In his Dialogo facetissimo et ridiculosissimo, a short comedy written in the 1520s, Zaccarotto, the soul of one of Ruzante's dead friends, comes back to earth and explains to the two hungry protagonists, the peasants Menego and Duozzo, how things work in the afterlife. Those who have been pious, always said their prayers, fasted and abstained from sensual pleasures, certainly went to heaven. This heaven, however, he reveals, is not a merry place: one does not eat or drink there. Instead one spends one's time in acts of penitence, and the only joy consists in contemplating God. The already starving Menego and Duozzo, quite concerned about a paradise without food, ask Zaccarotto to describe where he is. He responds with the extraordinary revelation that there exists a second heaven, much more attractive than the first. In this happy heaven are the 'good companions' like himself and his other dead friends. Only cheerful and honest men who did not spend their time denying the senses with prayer and fasting may enter this paradise. There life is lived in the enjoyment of the senses: one does not have to work, food and drink are readily available, and time is spent hunting, joking with friends, listening to music, singing and playing instruments. As Zaccarotto notes, the most important requisite to enter this heaven is to have been honest workers in life, not stingy or too liberal, and most of all 'happy men, not melancholics'. ²³ In the Ruzantian *Dialogo* facetissimo, the pleasures of the senses not only refine life on earth but open the way to what is clearly the better heaven. How, one wonders, did Ruzante conceive of this bizarre vision of a 'nontheistic paradise'?²⁴

²³ Beolco Angelo, *Dialogo facetissimo et ridiculosissimo di Ruzzante. Recitato à Fosson alla caccia, l'anno della carestia 1528* (Venice, Stephano di Alessi: 1554). Quotations from Ruzante, *Teatro*, ed. L. Zorzi (Turin: 1967) 689–721, at 719.

²⁴ Carroll L., "A Nontheistic Paradise in Renaissance Padua", Sixteenth Century Journal 24 (1993) 881–898.

Ruzante performed the Dialogo facetissimo at Fosson during 'the year of the famine, 1528', as the frontispiece of the edition printed in Venice in 1554 states.²⁵ It was a period of great difficulty for the peasants of the Venetian republic, a situation well known to Ruzante, who worked as an administrator on the estates owned by the Venetian noble Alvise Cornaro. The Dialogo testifies to the way recurrent famines terrorized the population: it centres on hunger and its devastating effects on the body and mind - graphically illustrated in the conversation between Menego and Duozzo. Surprisingly, after beginning with a stark picture of starving peasants and their sufferings, the Dialogo winds up with the measured vision of the heaven reserved to the 'good companions' who were able to enjoy the life of the senses in moderation. One might expect that the Dialogo would have approached and resolved the theme of extreme dearth by tormenting the protagonists with fantasies of the land of Cockaigne common to the literary and artistic imagination of the European Cinquecento, but instead Ruzante opened a different and more measured cultural conversation.

He was greatly concerned about the Veneto peasants' suffering due to the recurrent famines, and the effects of the usurers' practices during those famines. In fact, he voiced this concern forcefully in a monologue, the *Prima Oratione*, written around 1521 to honour the new bishop of Padua, the Venetian nobleman and cardinal Marco Cornaro who had repossessed the bishopric after the war of Cambrai. The *Prima Oratione* is a facetious petition to the cardinal to approve seven new laws, designed with total disregard for the dictates of the Church, to help the peasants live a better life. Ironically, Ruzante claims that by following these 'pagan' laws Padua peasants would be able to enjoy an earthly paradise, similar to the one described in the *Dialogo facetissimo*.

These new laws depict a utopian life for the peasants where longstanding Christian restrictions – especially those regarding eating – are softened if not abrogated altogether. Among the most interesting, one law allows peasants to skip fasting during religious festivals as their physical work requires them to be well-nourished. A second law states that it should not be a sin to work in the fields on religious holidays during harvest time

²⁵ Fosson is a village near Loreo in the Polesine where Alvise Cornaro, patron of Ruzante, used to go hunting with his friends.

²⁶ On the *Prima oratione* see Carroll L., "Introduction: 'New Law and Statutes': Playwright, Peasants, and *Papalisti*", in Beolco A. (il Ruzante), *La prima oratione*, ed. and trans. L. Carroll (London: 2009) 5–74.

or to eat in the morning before Mass. These new laws not only aim at abrogating traditional required periods of fasting but they also convey a new appreciation of the life of sensual pleasures that were not normally seen by the Church as a significant part of the life of sixteenth-century poor peasants. Perhaps most importantly, they insisted that peasants be allowed to hunt - an activity widely forbidden - and eat not merely to satisfy their hunger, but to enjoy the pleasure of doing so. In fact, the sin of gluttony was to be abolished: everyone should be able to eat things because they tasted good, even when not hungry. Actually Ruzante goes to great lengths to explain the benefits of eating for pleasure, referring to the authority of the 'doctors' (perhaps Platina) who say that pleasure and what tastes good are also good for health. This, he holds, makes one live longer, do good deeds and go to paradise.²⁷ It is worth noting here that Ruzante was not asking the cardinal to provide much-needed food for the hungry peasants in a time of famine; instead, he was calling for the liberation of food and eating from sin and guilt. As will be clearer later, Ruzante here was also taking a position in the ongoing debate on diet and health, which involved his patron and friend Alvise Cornaro along with other humanists such as Sperone Speroni.

Clearly Ruzante's vision does not match up well with the medical literature or the prescriptive literature of the day briefly discussed earlier; yet for Ruzante's peasants his new laws design an earthly paradise of the senses certainly much more attractive than the one reserved to the pious who observed the laws of the Church and were destined to suffer a sort of *contrappasso* in a sad paradise without food, drink or joy. This 'human theology' and these images of a 'nontheistic paradise' can be explained – according to Linda Carroll – in the context of the difficult economic times of the early sixteenth-century, along with the circulation in Northern Italy of works such as Thomas More's *Utopia* and Desiderius Erasmus's *Encomium Moriae* known by Ruzante, and the early diffusion of the ideas of evangelical reformers.²⁸ These ideas had arrived in the Veneto in the

²⁷ 'Number five: that eating not be a sin of gluttony when you eat because it tastes good and even though you are not hungry. Because the doctors say that what tastes good is good for you and makes for good health, and staying healthy you live a long time, [living a long time] you become old, you do good deeds, doing good deeds, you go to paradise [...]'. Beolco, *La prima oratione*, ed. Carroll 96–98.

²⁸ For an analysis of the *Prima oratione* and the influence of More and Erasmus see Carroll, "A Nontheistic Paradise in Renaissance Padua". On the diffusion of Thomas More's *Utopia* in Italy, see Nelson E., "Utopia through Italian Eyes: Thomas More and the Critics of Civic Humanism", *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (Winter 2006) 1029–1057.

first years of the sixteenth century via the trade routes that connected the Veneto with countries north of the Alps, such as Germany and Switzerland. It is not by accident that later in the century in the reprint of his works, the heterodox image of the two paradises and the radical laws proposed to Cardinal Cornaro in the *Prima oratione* incurred the wrath of Counter-Reformation censors.²⁹ As far as the influence of Thomas More's *Utopia* is concerned, Carroll shows that while More argued there that what is reasonable can give pleasure ('and that therefore one can change people's behaviour through laws appealing to reason'),³⁰ Ruzante reversed this position claiming that attention to the body and sensual pleasures comes first, allowing one to live a healthy and long life, do good deeds and therefore earn paradise. This is actually what happens to the soul of Zaccarotto and Ruzante's other dead friends in the *Dialogo facetissimo*.

To better understand Ruzante's vision of the senses and sensual pleasure I would like to look at the ongoing debate on food and health, pleasure and taste in the intellectual circles he frequented. Alvise Cornaro, protector of Ruzante, rich landowner in the Padua countryside, and agricultural innovator, is most famous for his four volumes entitled Trattati della vita sobria (first edition, Padua 1558) that promised long life and health if readers ate with great moderation, and only certain foods. Cornaro claimed to rely primarily on his own experience: when he was young he lived following the common belief that what was pleasing to his taste was also good for his health. He even listed his once favourite foods such as melons, raw greens, pies, cold wine, fish and pork – all foods that in sixteenthcentury treatises were labelled dangerous, along with our eels and fish pies. But Cornaro reassured his readers claiming to have reached the ripe old age of almost a hundred years and stressing that he had regained health once he eliminated from his diet all the foods that greatly appealed to his taste. Concessions to the pleasures of taste, gluttony – he concluded – led to sickness and a premature death, which he had successfully avoided.31 His Trattato was highly popular: published for the first time at midcentury it became the 'only continuously published treatise in the genre' with repeated editions and translations continuing from the seventeenth

²⁹ Zorzi, "Note al *Dialogo facetissimo*", in Ruzante, *Teatro*, ed. Zorzi (note 50, at 1447).

³⁰ Carroll, "A Nontheistic Paradise" 882-883.

³¹ Cornaro A., "Trattato de la vita sobria del Magnifico M. Luigi Cornaro nobile vinitiano", in Cornaro A., *Scritti sulla vita sobria: Elogio e lettere,* ed. M. Milani (Venice: 1983) 79–101.

to the twentieth centuries. 32 In fact, Cornaro nourished his reputation as an expert on healthy eating to gain a long life in letters and other writings with well-conceived half-truths and imaginative fantasies about his own long life. 33

Ruzante, in contrast, died at forty (in 1542), not a short life by sixteenth-century standards, but a very young age in Cornaro's opinion. In fact he regretted the death of his friend in a number of his letters and, as might be expected, attributed it to his food and drink excesses. In a letter written to the patriarch of Aquileia, Daniele Barbaro, after Ruzante's death (and published in 1563), Cornaro declared that at ninety-one³⁴ he had reached an earthly paradise thanks to his 'vita sobria', which was pleasing to God because it was 'hostile to the senses and guided by reason'.³⁵ The language and references used by Cornaro in this and other works show that he wished to advertise his theory and gain supporters by showing that his friend Ruzante was wrong about the senses both in his life and in his works. Even though he does not mention Ruzante, his letter appears to refer to him twice: first in the reference to the earthly paradise that one can enjoy even after the age of eighty thanks to the cult of Saint Moderation (Santa Continenza); second in the affirmation that when a man

³² Albala, Eating Right 36.

³³ The date of his birth is uncertain. Alvise Cornaro was probably born in 1484 and died in 1566. In his first two wills he declared, respectively, to have been born in 1478 and in 1482. On this, see Blason M., "La vita di Alvise Cornaro (1484–1566)", in Puppi L. (ed.), *Alvise Cornaro e il suo tempo* (Padua: 1980) 18–26. If the date of 1484 is correct, he certainly lived a long life, eighty years, but not more than ninety, as he claimed in some of his writings. See Sambin P., *Per le biografie di Angelo Beolco, il Ruzante, e di Alvise Cornaro* (Padua: 2002) 121–122. His work survives today, translated and adapted by followers of the 'caloric restriction theory', as a popular health fad.

³⁴ In this text Cornaro declares that he is ninety-one years old, an example of the manipulation of his age. See also the affirmation in his "Amorevole essortazione del Magnifico M. Alvise Cornaro": 'Per il che io dico che, essendo (per la Iddio gratia) giunto a la età di 95 anni...' ('For this reason I affirm that, thanks to God, I have reached the age of ninety-five [...]'), in Cornaro, *Scritti sulla vita sobria*, ed. Milani 122–127, at 122.

^{35 &#}x27;Et io, che so da quale cagione procede, sono astretto a dimostrarla et fare conoscere che si può possedere uno paradiso terrestre dopo la età delli ottanta anni, il quale possedo io; ma non si può possederlo se non con il mezo della santa Continenza et della virtuosa Vita Sobria, amate molto dal grande Idio, perché son nemiche dil senso et amiche della ragione' ('And because I know the reason for this, I am obliged to demonstrate and to make known to everybody that it is possible to enjoy an earthly paradise after the age of eighty as I do; but one cannot have it without the help of Saint Continence and the Virtuous Sober Life, greatly loved by God because they are enemies of the senses and friends of reason'). See Cornaro, "Lettera scritta dal Magnifico M. Alvise Cornaro al Reverendissimo Barbaro, Patriarca eletto di Aquileia", in Cornaro, *Scritti sulla vita sobria*, ed. Milani 115–121, at 115.

arrives at the age of forty he has to change his way of life regarding eating and drinking if he wants to grow old.³⁶ In another exchange of letters with his friend, the humanist Sperone Speroni, who was involved in the current debate pro or against the *vita sobria*, Cornaro explicitly accuses the disorderly and intemperate eating habits of Ruzante as being the cause of his premature death:

I try to find a way to persuade my friends that the excesses of the body are the reason many men die young. I tell them this and they do not believe me; nonetheless they continue to die because of this and keep me in this unhappiness in which I find myself now that our dearest Messer Ruzzante has died. 37

Alvise Cornaro's meditations on the *vita sobria*, and the difference between his longevity and his friend's short life, led him to rewrite one of Ruzante's most famous works. A few years after the latter's death, Cornaro composed his own *Oration* (c. 1545–1550), which was a close imitation of the *Prima Oratione*.³⁸ In it, the laws in favour of the peasants are repeated with some significant changes and one major omission: the law that allows peasants to eat not merely to satisfy hunger, but to enjoy the pleasure of doing so, is quietly dropped.³⁹ Cornaro did not limit himself to this crucial deletion: he also dedicated a long paragraph to the advertisement of his strict diet, lifting concepts from his *Vita sobria* to reaffirm his condemnation of any pleasure in eating and the unequivocal equation of eating with gluttony.⁴⁰

³⁶ '[...] ma l'huomo mentre che è giovine, perché è più sensuale, che ragionevole, seguita il senso; & essendo poi pervenuto alla età di XXXX ò L anni debbe pur sapere che all'hora è giunto alla metà della sua vita [...] la onde è necessario di mutare vita nel suo mangiare, e bere, dalli quali dipende il vivere sano & lungamente' ('[...] but when a man is young he follows the senses because he is more sensual than reasonable. But when he gets to the age of forty or fifty he must know that he has reached his middle age [....] therefore it becomes necessary to change his lifestyle in eating and drinking, on which our long and healthy life depends'). Cornaro, *Scritti sulla vita sobria*, ed. Milani 118.

³⁷ '[...] io gelo dico e essi non me lo credono e pur se non per desordeni se ne moreno e tengono me in questa infelicità, ne la quale son hora e più che mai fusse per la morte del nostro carissimo messer Ruzzante'. See the letter in the "Appendice" to Bellinati C., "Alvise Cornaro governatore del Vescovado di Padova", in Puppi L. (ed.), *Alvise Cornaro e il suo tempo* 140–148 (letter at 146–148) and in Cornaro, *Scritti sulla vita sobria*, ed. Milani 141–143.

³⁸ The *Oration* by Cornaro has been published and edited by Marisa Milani: Cornaro A., *Orazione per il Cardinale Marco Cornaro e Pianto per la morte del Bembo*, ed. M. Milani (Bologna: 1981) 1–35.

³⁹ The *Oration* is discussed in Chapter III of Lippi E., *Cornariana: Studi su Alvise Cornaro* (Padua: 1983) 93–152. Lippi juxtaposes the section on the pleasure of eating from the *Prima oratione* by Ruzante with the modified version written by Cornaro; see ibid., 140–142.

⁴⁰ Lippi, Cornariana 141–145.

For Cornaro, only by following the precepts of his *vita sobria* and continence could one live a long life.

Ruzante's last work, the Lettera all'Alvarotto (1536, more Veneto), provides his final word in this debate on food habits and the vita sobria. The Lettera all'Alvarotto, which critics have defined as the spiritual testament of Ruzante, is a complex apology for the senses and the materiality of life.⁴¹ Ruzante reaffirms his earlier conviction that an honest life respectful of the bodily senses will lead humans to heaven. Reason and religion, the guiding principles in Cornaro's Vita sobria, are here completely shunned. Ruzante addresses his Lettera to his friend Marco Alvarotto, who had been his companion in his theatrical ventures in the Veneto. He explains to him his sudden desire to live forever on this earth and his subsequent search in his books to find Lady Temperance – according to the teaching of his patron Alvise Cornaro – and ask her to help him realize his desire. This brings no results, however, and Ruzante finally falls asleep. In a dream he enters an orchard and meets his dead friend, the actor Barba Polo, who guides him through a beautiful landscape.⁴² Lady Temperance is nowhere to be found there. Barba Polo indicates instead Lady Mirth, who rules the blissful place along with her brother Lord Smile, Lady Joy, Madam Feast, Lord Party, and many other smiling and happy inhabitants. Nearby, Lord Appetite and Lord Taste are setting the table for a dinner worthy of an abbot. Maybe, I would add, they are even preparing a dish of dangerous but tasty eels. Here in this earthly paradise are finally found, living happily and enjoying their senses, the good companions of Ruzante to whom the Dialogo facetissimo had promised just such a paradise.

The image of the orchard paradise used by Ruzante was taken up in the same period by the poet Francesco Berni and his friends in the Vignaiuoli academy, a group that produced a rich array of 'food poems'. The orchard they represented in satirical poems and their commentaries was not, however, an earthly paradise of 'honest pleasures' for good companions; rather, it tended playfully to overturn the Petrarchan canon with food images alluding to sexual parts of the body and through mocking imitation of the language of medical advice literature. At other points, however, they actually talked about various types of food and the pleasures inherent in the act of eating. If humanist writers such as Platina played a

⁴¹ Beolco A., "Littera de Ruzante a Messier Marco Alvarotto", in Ruzante, *Teatro*, ed. Zorzi 1226–1243.

⁴² Barba Polo, also mentioned in the comedy *Piovana*, was a famous actor in the circle of Ruzante

major role in developing a new philosophy of eating in the Renaissance, poets and writers were similarly influential in what historian Jean-Louis Flandrin has called the passage from dietetics to gastronomy.⁴³ The Italian word *qusto*, not quite appropriately translated by the English words 'taste' and 'palate', started to be used more frequently in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century literature to indicate the pleasure of eating. Progressively, it came to indicate il buongusto, or the ability to evaluate not just food but other aspects of everyday life from an aesthetic point of view that involved all the senses.⁴⁴ Pietro Aretino, Francesco Berni and other poets and writers from the group of the Vignaiuoli, who were all active in the first fifty years of the Cinquecento, all championed the word *gusto* and its aesthetic connotations. If the good companions of Ruzante had to search for their earthly paradise in dreams, Aretino and his friends living in Venice in those same years certainly attempted to find their paradise of the senses, especially taste, in everyday life.⁴⁵ In a letter written in 1537 to Gianfrancesco Pocopanno, Aretino thanks his friend for sending him a gift: a *sonetto* accompanied by a basket of the most prized fruit of the time – pears. 46 The language of food dominates the brief letter: the gift is well received as it offers both the fruit of his friend's clever wit and of his orchard. Aretino tells him that both have been agreeable to his mind and his *gusto*, but – he points out – if the *sonetto* is sweet, the pears have gone beyond the excellence of every taste, in this case defined by the

⁴³ Flandrin J.-L., "From Dietetics to Gastronomy: The Liberation of the Gourmet", in Flandrin J.-L. – Montanari M. (eds.), *Food: A Culinary History*, English ed. A. Sonnenfeld (New York: 1999) 418–432.

⁴⁴ Montanari M., *Il formaggio con le pere: La storia in un proverbio* (Rome – Bari: 2008) 93–103. For France see Flandrin, "From Dietetics to Gastronomy", in *Food: A Culinary History* 428–432. It is interesting to note that Cornaro in his *Trattato* often uses the word *gusto*, but only in a negative sense; see, for instance, his explanation of how one has to eat only what is necessary to survive: 'sapendo che quel più è tutto infirmità et morte, et che è diletto solo del *gusto*, il qual passa in un momento, ma lungamente poi dà dispiacer et nocumento al corpo, et alla fine l'ammazza insieme con l'anima' ('Because we know that excess is all illness and death; and that it pleases only the palate, which pleasure lasts for a moment, while in the long run it brings sadness and harm to the body, and in the end kills the body along with the soul'; my emphasis); Cornaro, "Trattato della vita sobria", in idem, *Scritti sulla vita sobria*, ed. Milani 79–101, at 80. Interestingly, the Italian word *gusto* entered the English dictionary with the meaning of 'taste' as well as 'pleasure'.

⁴⁵ On the attention Aretino devoted to his senses and in particular taste in his letters see Giannetti L., "Italian Renaissance Food-Fashioning or the Triumph of Greens", *California Italian Studies Journal* 1 (2010) 1–16, at 11 (online at: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1n97sood).

⁴⁶ Letter to Messer Gianfrancesco Pocopanno, in Aretino P., *Lettere*, ed. F. Erspamer, 2 vols. (Parma: 1995), vol. I, letter no. 295, at 614.

word *sapore*.⁴⁷ Ironically, while Aretino greatly enjoyed the most fragile and prized fruit of the time, a few years later Cornaro, who received the same gift from a friend, does not share the same reaction and writes back to the giver:

 $[\ldots]$ those pears were really beautiful and good, as my son-in-law, who enjoyed them, reassured me; as you know, I do not eat them because my Lady Continence already long ago prohibited them to me.⁴⁸

The Lady Temperance that Ruzante could not find anywhere in the orchard-paradise of his dreams certainly was to accompany Cornaro in his long, abstemious, and perhaps not very happy life.

This article has focused on a lively and often intense debate in sixteenth-century Venetian culture about the sense of taste, temperance, sobriety and the pleasure of eating. It reflects, obviously, just one aspect of the many emerging discussions about food and taste more generally in that period. In fact, behind and beyond Alvise Cornaro's sobriety, Ruzante's call for the elimination of any guilt from eating and Pietro Aretino's refined taste for food, there existed a whole range of literary reflections on taste, from the descriptions of the exaggerated appetite of the giant Morgante in the mock-epic poem by Luigi Pulci to the characters of gluttonous parasites and courtiers appearing in numerous other works of the period.⁴⁹ Such attention to taste in the literary imagination of sixteenth-century Italy, even though not always positive, homogeneous or unified, is nonetheless a sign of the beginning of a long cultural revolution in which taste, pleasure and celebration progressively displaced gluttony and sin.

⁴⁷ 'I frutti del vostro ingegno e del vostro orto mi sono stati sì soave cibo all'intelletto e al *gusto*, che altro tale non ho provato sin qui. Certamente il sonetto è dolce, ma le pere [...] trapassano il segno d'ogni *sapore* e d'ogni *sugo*' ('The fruit of your wit and your orchard have been such a pleasant food to my mind and my taste that I have never felt anything similar. Surely the sonnet is sweet but the pears have gone beyond the excellence of every taste and sauce'; my emphasis). Ibid.

⁴⁸ '[...] et erano molto belli, et buoni per quello, che a me disse mio genero, che li mangiò, che io non mangio peri, perché la mia S.ra Continenza già me li devedò'. Cornaro A., Letter to "Magnifico M. Alvise", in idem, *Scritti sulla vita sobria*, ed. Milani 148–153, at 148. The letter was sent from Padua in 1551.

⁴⁹ The mocking presentation of the gluttonous appetites of monks and parasites in comic prose and poetry is testimony to a culture that continued to be troubled by the idea of pleasure in eating and to condemn the sense of taste, even though less virulently than from a church's pulpit. On the other hand, early Florentine humanists like Matteo Palmieri and Leon Battista Alberti, while still condemning excesses at the table, had already recognized that taste plays a crucial role in establishing one's identity as citizen and Christian. For an extensive discussion of the Florentine humanists and their take on food and taste see Vitullo, "Taste and Temptation".

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TO CAPTIVATE THE SENSES: SENSORY GOVERNANCE, HERESY, AND IDOLATRY IN MID-TUDOR ENGLAND

Matthew Milner

In autumn 1555 Nicholas Ridley was put on trial for heresy. John Foxe's account of the examinations in his 1563 edition of the Acts and Monuments contains an exchange between the former Edwardine evangelical bishop of Rochester and London and Mary I's new bishop of Gloucester, James Brooks, Brooks, clearly exasperated, commanded the accused: 'captivate youre senses'.1 For Brooks the obstinate reformer had obviously lost control of his wits. Such a quip, given the context of religious life in Marian England, might appear relatively unimportant. Nevertheless, Brooks's choice of phrase drew on principles integral not only to Tudor, but European, religiosity. It is anything but an off the cuff comment, and has its own history. In these three words Brooks clearly captured the sensory metaphors, allegories, and language that shaped late-medieval and Tudor sensory culture. To captivate the senses meant reining them in, bridling and governing them. Like unruly horses, animals, servants they needed masters, well-ordered reason, so as to avoid sensual lust, delights, pleasures, and worldliness. In losing control of his senses, in Brooks's eyes, Ridley had allowed them to captivate and bridle him instead. For the Marian bishop, Ridley was a sensual transgressor, a man who had surrendered his humanity and become like an animal, subservient to his wits.

Perhaps one of the most enduring stereotypes of the Reformation is the casting of idolatry as the epitome of sensual transgression, sensuality, and sensory excess. Reformers attacked the sensuality of late-medieval religious life, with its images, incense, music, and devotional practices. The purgation they brought to English and much of European Christianity was a cleansing of the sensory landscape of diabolic falsehood, deceit, and apish feigned piety. In contrast, however, Nicholas Ridley was on trial for heresy, not idolatry, making Brooks's accusation seems odd. Yet situating the phrase within the wider context of early- and mid-Tudor sensory

¹ Foxe John, *Acts and Monuments* (London, John Day: 1563) 1370. Available from: http://www.hrionline.shef.ac.uk/foxe/. [Accessed: 06.02.2009].

culture indicates that the Marian bishop was not at all novel in his accusation of sensuality against Ridley. Long before the religious conflicts of the sixteenth century, heresy had been regarded as the result of profound sensory misuse and misgovernance. Brooks did not just draw on sensory metaphors, allegories, and language; he proclaimed a well-established belief that heretics were witless captives to the sensible world as much as to their own conceits. Even so, the longstanding view that late-medieval imagery and liturgical life were sensual retains its potency. With Brooks's accusation, it appears that both conservatives and evangelicals accused each other of unbridled sensuality.

Historians of mid-Tudor England tend to construe heresy and idolatry as distinct categories. Heresy, because it is held to be a matter of opinion, is often situated as a matter for the intellect, while idolatry's emphasis on the sensual tends to be regarded as more bodily and beastly in orientation. Whether we view these configurations as a latent Cartesianism of sorts, treating the former as overly mental and the latter as corporeal, tends to hamper our understanding of how these two forms of religious transgression were intimately related. Their affinities become striking when we consider the common vocabulary informing their shared anxiety about sensuality, as much as the grounding both had in sensory processes and data. Those working against these forms of transgression made appeals to sensory control through the use of a language of captivation. This reveals not just an overlooked element to mid-Tudor cultural strife, but suggests an essential avenue for reconsidering the tumultuous and conflicted English cultural world of the 1530s and 1540s. Brooks's phrase is a wedge we can use to break apart perceptions about the nature of English reform. It blurs the usual narrative which construes sensuality solely as idolatry: here is a traditionalist accusing a leading evangelical of sensuality. Its own brief history indicates long held anxieties relating religious and sensory transgressions. Though idolatry and heresy in mid-Tudor England are vast topics, what follows describes the sensory foundations of these two categories of religious transgression. Rather than seeing them as socio-political or cultural movements, or through the lens of particular individuals or events, we see how the language of sensory control and sensuality configured idolatry and heresy as sensory misgovernance. Consequently these, the gravest form of religious transgression, do not emerge as distinct categories, but blur into one another as manifestations of a fundamental cultural anxiety towards sensuality. The appeal to this anxiety by both sides of the religious divide suggests religious conflict in mid-Tudor England owed as much to traditional sensory culture as the pursuit of reform.

1. Keeping the Senses

Tudor England, in many ways, saw an intensification of anxiety surrounding sensuality and sensory control. The printing of well-known devotional works and practical guides to godliness in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries saw stronger articulation of traditional concerns. The language of control and the dangers of sensuality defined discussions in works like Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi* and the translation of Catherine of Siena's *Dialogo, The Orcherd of Syon*. Short primers like the mid-fifteenth-century *A good tretyse of gode levyng, to alle maner astates of the people*, confessors' manuals and other clerical advice books listed the five senses alongside the seven sins and ten commandments and urged their use as a confessional template.² Though these works ranged considerably, all taught how to avoid the 'perel arisep from pe delijt and lust taking in sensual wittis'.³ The breadth of works discussing the senses indicates the widespread knowledge and depth to Tudor views on the senses.

The language of captivation, bridling, and control of the senses was constant. The fifteenth-century Benedictine poet, John Lydgate prayed for Jesus to 'bridell myne outrage under thy discipline fetter sensualyte', while the 1507 version of Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* again noted the mystic's advice to shut the 'fyve windows'. *Ars moriendi texts like *The Dyetary of Ghostly Helthe* and *The Dyeng Creature* saw the 'v. wyttes' as 'servauntes' to be 'rewled at all tymes'. *Andrew Chertsey's 1502 *Ordynarye of Crysten Men* urged the mortification of the senses, keeping 'sensualyte' under 'the rodde and dyscyplyne', restraining all 'sensuall appetite'. 'Dyscrecyon [...] of thynges sensyble' was when 'we surmount [...] bestes'. 6

² Catherine of Siena, *The Orcherd of Syon*, ed. P. Hodgson – G.M. Liegey (London: 1966); Kempis Thomas à, *Imitation of Christ*, ed. B.J.H. Biggs (Oxford: 1997); British Library, Additional MS 10106, fol. 41a; British Library, Harley MS 2406, fol. 9r; British Library, Harley MS 2343, fols. 81v–82v; Trinity College Cambridge, MS R.3.21, fol. 1b. See also *Speculum Christiani*, ed. G. Holmstedt (London: 1933) 60–96; *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, ed. T.F. Simmons – H.E. Nolloth (Oxford: 1972) 19; Pecock Reginald, *The Reule of Crysten Religioun*, ed. W.C. Greet (London: 1927) 107–116, 271–285, 425–429, 501–502; *The Book of Vices and Virtues: A Fourteenth-Century Translation of the 'Somme le Roi' of Lorens d'Orleans*, ed. W.N. Francis (London: 1942) 153, 225–226, 276.

³ Pecock, The Reule 283.

⁴ Lydgate John, *Here Begynneth the Testame*[n]t of Iohn Lydgate Monke of Berry (London, Richard Pynson: 1520), fol. AIIIv; Hilton Walter, *Scala perfectionis* (London, Julian Notary: 1507), fol. KIr.

⁵ The Dyetary of Ghostly Helthe, fol. AIIr; AIVr; Duffy E., The Stripping of the Altars (New Haven: 1992) 264.

⁶ Chertsey Andrew, The Ordynarye of Crysten Men (London: 1502), fols. ggIIv-IIIr; IIr-v.

William Atkinson, translating Jean Gerson, advised 'restraine all they sensual partes with the brydell of reason'.

Such works drew readily on classical allegories and metaphors, and scriptural paradigms of sensory control and transgression. In Alain de Lille's *Anticlaudianus* Reason, as the driver of a chariot, ruled over her horses, the senses; in Philo of Alexandria's "On Abraham", the patriarch sought to maintain his sovereignty over his servants. For the Prophet Jeremiah and others, the senses were windows, gates or 'fyve posternes'. Scripture through the accounts of Eve and doubting Thomas told of instances wherein the senses gained the upper hand. Just as it was sinful to transgress like Eve in the pursuit of sensual pleasures, it was equally as sinful to rely on sense data like Thomas. Both were beastly 'sensualyte', whose avoidance was integral to medieval religious teaching. The senses were something to be captured and tamed, ruled by reason, or else they would cast their rider into the sea of fleshly sin. Richard Hill's early-sixteenth-century commonplace book summed it all up: 'Kepe well X and flee from sevyn / Spende well V and cum to hevyn'. 10

2. Idolatry

Perhaps not surprisingly, evangelicals drew on the presence of such teaching. Their assaults on pre-Reformation piety cast traditional religiosity as unacceptably sensual and idolatrous. Idolatry was 'any form of devotion that is judged to be incorrect', a 'behavior displayed in liturgical and social systems'. Il William Tyndale best articulated the idolater and the idol in the

 $^{^7}$ Atkinson William, A Full Devote and Gostely Treatyse (London: 1517), fols. BVIIIv–Civ; IVIIv. Pir

⁸ Philo of Alexandria, *The Works of Philo Judaeus, the Contemporary of Josephus*, ed. C.D. Yonge, 4 vols. (London: 1854), vol. II, 426–427; Sears E., "Sensory Perception and its Metaphors in the Time of Richard of Fournival", in Bynum W.F. – Porter R. (eds.), *Medicine and the Five Senses* (Cambridge: 1993) 29–33; Alain de Lille, *Anticlaudianus or The Good and Perfect Man*, ed. J.J. Sheridan (Toronto: 1973) 121–125; *Jeremiah* 9:20–22 and Book II, *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. J.R.R. Tolkien (Oxford: 1962) passim, esp. 33.

⁹ John 20:24-26.

¹⁰ Hill Richard, Songs, Carols, and other Miscellaneous Poems from the Balliol Ms. 354, Richard Hill's Commonplace Book, ed. R. Dyboski (Oxford: 1908) 140. See also The Dyetary of Ghostly Helthe, fols. B₃v–B₄r; C₅r–v.

¹¹ Eire C.M.N., "The Reformation Critique of the Image", in Scribner R.W. (ed.), Bilder und Bildersturm im Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit (Wiesbaden: 1990) 52, 63; Eire C.M.N., War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin (Cambridge: 1986) 5.

early 1530s. Rather than images being 'servant unto man', he bemoaned, 'the image serveth not thee, but thou the image'. Hugh Latimer echoed the sentiment as undue 'trust in the image'. As a practice it surrendered agency to a sensible object, captivating the senses in worldliness: it was spiritual harlotry and fornication. 4

Aside from their religious ethic, such remarks readily captured basic dynamics in Aristotelian sensation that made idolatry so dangerous for contemporary Christian culture. Sensing, including vision, was passive reception of the accidents of a sensible object. Though objects acted on sense organs, it was up to reason to govern and control the appetites, habits, and impulses sensation created and maintained.¹⁵ Not only was the image, in Tyndale's eyes, false, in sensory terms; without rational governance, it obtained control over its perceiver, shaping and instigating future action and thought. The transition from abuse of images critiqued by Thomas More, John Colet, and Erasmus, to wholesale accusations of idolatry in 1530s England was complex, as discussed by Margaret Aston among others. The 1535 translation of Martin Bucer's attack on religious imagery, A Treatise Declaryng and Shewing Dyvers causes, sheds light on this transition. Characterizing images as dead or broken, the Strasbourg reformer chastised the anthropomorphic expectations foolish believers held concerning images. Despite their 'fygure and symilytude of man' they

¹² Tyndale William, An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, in Walter H. (ed.), An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, The Supper of the Lord After the True Meaning of John VI and 1 Cor. XI, and Wm. Tracy's Testament Expounded (Cambridge: 1845) 59, 62; Tyndale William, A Brief Declaration of the Sacraments, in Walter H. (ed.), Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures (Cambridge: 1848) 352; Tyndale William, The Prologue to the Prophet Jonas, ibid. 459; Aston Margaret, England's Iconoclasts: Volume I, Laws Against Images (Oxford: 1988) 145.

¹³ Aston, England's Iconoclasts 412; Edgeworth Roger, Sermons Very Fruitfull, Godly and Learned, ed. J. Wilson (Woodbridge: 1993) 144; Latimer Hugh, Letter to Morice, in Corrie G.E. (ed.), Sermons and Remains (Cambridge: 1845) 360.

¹⁴ Eire, War Against the Idols 226.

¹⁵ The best summary extant from early Tudor England is most likely John Trevisa's late-fourteenth-century translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum*, printed by William Caxton first in 1495, and then by others later in 1535 and 1582. See Anglicus Bartholomaeus, *Batman vppon Bartholome His Booke De proprietatibus rerum*, *Newly Corrected, Enlarged and Amended* (London, Thomas East: 1582) Book III, chapters 9, 17–21, fols. 14v, 17v–21v; and Book V, chapters 5–50, fols. 37v–50r. The principles, however, are traceable in the widest array of works from theological and philosophical treatises, especially commentaries on Aristotle's *De anima* and *De sensu*, to vernacular devotional works. For more on Aristotelian sensation in Tudor England, see my monograph *The Senses and the English Reformation* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2011).

did not actually have 'mannes wyttes and reason'. ¹⁶ They were senseless, and pricking them with pins proved it. ¹⁷ Idolatry was not merely failure to use senses properly; it gave misrepresentative dead objects agency over believers.

Evangelical sentiments regarding sensible deceits of traditional piety are best seen in characterizations of the Mass as sensual. On account of Henrician statutes forbidding debate of the Eucharistic miracle, especially from 1543, evangelical critiques focused on the Mass-as-liturgy until the late 1540s. The harlot Mistress Missa, the whore of Babylon, was Satanspawn. She strode as a 'glorious strumpet and gallant harlot' or as a 'mermaid', for Miles Coverdale, 'bewitch[ing] men'. 18 Her sensuality had 'seduced and deceived' Christians for ages by alluring the wits of her viewers with her outward appearance, but she was 'an abominable idol, full of idolatry, blasphemy' which men adorned and honoured 'with their bodies'. 19 The pinnacle of her deception was the elevation of the host. Its ocularity caused 'poore simple people [...] to put theyr trust in [...] seyng and hearing of Masse' and not 'in Christ'. The lists of corrupt paraphernalia appearing in works of many English reformers took the sensory transgression of idolatry as implicit.²⁰ With the loosening of restrictions on debate in the late 1540s, the assault moved from liturgical trappings to Eucharistic doctrine itself. For reformers like Thomas Cranmer, Henry and Edward's Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Italian Peter Martyr Vermigli asserted the position that had long defined arch-heresy: sense data disproved transubstantiation itself.²¹ As much as reformers

¹⁶ Bucer Martin, A Treatise Declaryng and Shewing Dyvers Causes that Pyctures and Other Ymages Which Were Wont to be Worshypped Ar in no Wise to be Suffred in the Temples or Church of Cristen Men (London, T. Godfray for W. Marshall: 1535), fol. F7v, see also fols. B3r, B4r, C7v, E7v, and F8r; Aston, England's Iconoclasts 203–206; See also, Eire, War Against the Idols 51–52.

¹⁷ Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars 381.

¹⁸ Coverdale Miles, An Exhortation to the Carrying of Christ's Cross, in Pearson G. (ed.) Remains of Myles Coverdale (Cambridge: 1846) 267.

¹⁹ Davies C., A Religion of the Word (Manchester: 2002) 25–43; Becon Thomas, A Comparison Between the Lord's Supper and the Pope's Mass, in Ayre J. (ed.), Prayers and Other Pieces of Thomas Becon (Cambridge: 1844) 354, 389; Latimer Hugh, Letter LI, in Corrie (ed.), Sermons and Remains 440.

 $^{^{20}}$ Coverdale, An Exhortation 267; Becon, A Comparison 389; Becon Thomas, The Displaying of the Popish Mass, in Ayre (ed.), Prayers and Other Pieces of Thomas Becon 265.

²¹ Vermigli Peter Martyr, *The Oxford Treatise and Disputation on the Eucharist, 1549,* trans. and ed. J.C. McLelland (Kirksville, MO: 2000); Cranmer Thomas, *An Answer of Thomas Archebyshop of Canterburye, vnto a crafty cauillation by S. Gardiner,* in Cox J.E., *The Works of Thomas Cranmer* (Cambridge: 1846) 68–80; Hooper John, *Answer to the Bishop*

clamoured for sensory integrity to the Eucharistic elements, their adversaries bellowed the need to rein the senses as the miracle surpassed their remit.

Though they criticized the sensuality of traditional piety, evangelicals also echoed its calls for sensory discernment and control. For Hooper, as for John Calvin, idolatry was evidence of an internal lack of rule over human faculties.²² Hugh Latimer prayed in 1531 in a letter to Sir Edward Baynton, referencing *Hebrews* 5:14, that he 'have sensus exercitatos ad discernendum bonum et malum, "senses well enough exercised to discern good and evil", while the young reformer John Frith two years later asserted against traditionalists that 'men have seen too long with your spectacles; yet now [...] they begin to see with their own eyes'.23 Wilhelm Gnaphaeus's widely translated work appearing as A Myrrour or Glasse in 1536, urged Christians to leave the 'tentes of your sensualyte'. 24 Citing Bede, Foxe warned that things 'maye run at riot' if reason didn't have hold of 'the bridle'.25 Idolaters were sensually driven, just like animals and the lecherous. John Bale noted that Henrician bishops made men 'captyve slaves unto soche idols' who 'wrappe themselves ageyne [in] [...] yokes of bondage'. 26 William Thomas concurred in 1549 'the unbrideled appetite of them that [...] use the dead carcasses' of traditional religion.²⁷ It's a staple we are very familiar with: the pope was a 'carnal beast', having 'beastly wit', whose minions were driven by 'the belly' and entrapped others, like the serpent, in sinful sensuality.²⁸ True Christians used their senses to discern false religion, and avoided such sensual fornication.

of Winchester's Book 123; Gilby Anthony, An Answer to the Deuilish Detection of Stephane Gardiner (London, S. Meirdman for J. Day: 1548), fol. 126r.

²² Aston, England's Iconoclasts 436-437.

²³ Latimer Hugh, Letter VII, in Corrie (ed.), Sermons and Remains 338; Frith John, A Book Made by John Frith Prisoner in the Tower of London, Answering unto M. More's Letter, in Russell T. (ed.), The Works of the English Reformers (London: 1831) 406; Gilby, An Answer, fol. 42v.

²⁴ Gnaphaeus Gulielmus, *A Myrrour or Glasse for Them that Be Syke* [and] in Payne (Southwark, James Nicolson for Ian Gough: 1536), fol. Jvi'.

²⁵ Foxe, Acts and Monuments 559.

²⁶ Bale John, *A Dysclosynge or Opennynge of the Manne of Synne* (Zurich, Olyuer Iacobson: 1543), fols. 18r and 94r.

²⁷ Thomas William, *The Vanitee of this World* (London, Thomas Berthelet: 1549), fol. AVv.

²⁸ Thomas, The Vanitee of this World, fol. AVIr; Tyndale William, The Practise of Prelates and Whether the Kinge's Grace Maye Be Separated from his Quene, because She was his Brother's Wyfe, in Walter H. (ed.), Expositions and Notes on Sundry Portions of The Holy Scriptures Together with The Practice of Prelates (Cambridge: 1849) 254–255, 260, 281.

3. Heresy

Nicholas Ridley was an avowed enemy of idolatry and accused of heresy. Nevertheless, contrary to the usual casting of idolatry as sensual, for his accusers he was a sensual deviant. Unlike idolatry, heresy is not typically seen as sensual, but rather a purely intellective affair. The 1401 statute, *De haeretico comburendo*, defined heresies as 'false opinions' and 'wicked doctrine'.²⁹ *A Declaration concerning Heresy* of 1535 saw it as 'erronious opinions that infect and corrupt', as did William Warham's 1530 *A Publick Instrument*, which listed particular heresies.³⁰ Thomas More's great set piece on heresy, *A Dialogue concerning Heresies*, defined the transgression as a 'syde way [...] from the comen faith and byleve' and 'false byleyfe and faccyous ways ful of busynes'.³¹ Mid-Tudor authors tended to agree with this – Elyot defined heresy in his *Bibliotheca* of 1542 as 'obstinate opinion', while Miles Hogarde saw it as 'any false or wrong opinion' which went against the Church.³²

As a choice or an opinion, heresy is typically seen as a post-sensory cognitive, rational, and intellective matter of perception and volition having explicitly little to do with the senses per se. Appreciating the psychological contours at stake and the distinctions between heresy as a practice and heretical doctrine, however, brings some analytical nuance. Ridley's accusers saw heresy as something more than just intellective irrationality; it was sensory-based animal-like worldliness. The medieval scholar and theologian Robert Grosseteste saw heresy as a matter of obstinate false perception, while Gordon Leff has emphasized the extent to which it was a matter of discipline.³³ Like animals, heretics did not discipline their senses and perception, but let them override reason. Their misuse of sensory data to undermine authority made them servants to the things they sensed – heretical doctrine. Heretics were also insane. As Gary Dickson

²⁹ 2. Henry IV c. 15, *The Statutes of the Realm*, 11 vols. (London: 1810–1828), vol. II, 125–128.

³⁰ Warham William, *A Publick Instrument*, in Wilkins David (ed.), *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 4 vols. (London: 1737), vol. III, 727–737.

³¹ More Thomas, *A Dialogue concerning Heresies*, in Sylvester R.S. et al. (eds.), *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 15 vols. (New Haven: 1963–1990), vol. VI, 37–38, 266.

³² Elyot Thomas, *Bibliotheca Eliotae Eliotis librarie* (London, Thomas Berthelet: 1542), fol. QVIIIr; Hogarde Miles, *Displaying of the Protestantes* (London, Robert Caly: 1556), fols. 11V–12F.

³³ Leff G., Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent, c. 1250–c. 1450, 2 vols. (Manchester: 1999), vol. I, 230, 486; McSheffrey S., "Heresy, Orthodoxy, and English Vernacular Religion 1480–1525", Past & Present 186 (2005) 47.

reminds us, heresy as 'insanity was [...] something of a medieval topos', while Barbara Newman has noted that madness developed concurrently with notions of heresy.³⁴ The mental delusion of heretics featured in Thomas Netter's massive six-book work against Lollardy in the late 1420s, *Doctrinale antiquitatum fidei Catholicae Ecclesiae*.³⁵ Netter's discussions of scriptural interpretation and Eucharistic doctrine both turn on the word sense, offering interplay between meaning and sensation. Heretics use their senses where they ought not to, in ways that corrupt meaning.³⁶ John Colet, in a sermon to convocation in 1512 tied directly to a spate of prosecutions in Kent, London, and Coventry between 1509–1512, mocked heretics as 'men mad with marvellous folysshenes'.³⁷ Satirical attacks on evangelicals in John Skelton's 1528 *A Replycacyon* equated 'heretikes' with 'lunatikes' and 'frenetikes'.³⁸ Sensuality was an essential ingredient of heresy.

The earliest reactions to evangelical doctrine in the 1520s drew on these paradigms. Alongside Cardinal Thomas Wolsey's 'softly softly' approach to academic heresy in the mid-1520s, leading polemicists hammered home heretical sensory transgressions. In reaction to Luther, Fisher's February 11, 1526 sermon at St. Paul's Cross, touted the reformer as a blind fool who would lead others to damnation through his 'carnalitie'. Fisher urged his audience at the book burning to beware lest 'your senses shalbe corrupted by these heretikes', juxtaposing the 'safe' sight guaranteed by the Church. Skelton's 1528 work berated young Cambridge scholars who not only sought, like the disciple Thomas, to go 'farther than their wytte wyll reche', but the poet saw their 'wytlesse wantonesse' as a 'fantastical

³⁴ Flanagan S., "Heresy, Madness and Possession in the High Middle Ages", in Hunter I. – Laursen J.C. – Nederman C.J. (eds.), *Heresy in Transition: Transforming Ideas of Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: 2005) 30, 33.

³⁵ Netter Thomas, *Doctrinale antiquitatum fidei Catholicae Ecclesiae*, ed. B. Blanciotti, 3 vols. (Venice: 1757–1759, repr. 1967).

³⁶ Netter, *Doctrinale*, vol. I, cols. 335–336, 363; vol. II, cols. 7–8, 236, 332ff. See also Ghosh K., *The Wycliffite Heresy: Authority and the Interpretation of Texts* (Cambridge: 2002) 176.

³⁷ Colet John, *Sermon at Convocation* (1512) as in D'Alton C.W., "Heresy Hunting and Clerical Reform: William Warham, John Colet, and the Lollards of Kent, 1511–1512", in Hunter – Laursen – Nederman (eds.), *Heresy in Transition* 112.

³⁸ Skelton John, *A Replycacion Agaynst Certayne Yong Scolers* (London, Richard Pynson: 1528), fol. BIIIv.

³⁹ Fisher John, *A Sermon Had at Paulis by the Commandment of the Most Reuerend Father in God My Lorde Legate* (London, Thomas Berthelet: 1536), fol. A3r–v. See also D'Alton C.W., "The Suppression of Lutheran Heretics in England, 1526–1529", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 54 (2003) 229, 238.

frenely of $[\ldots]$ insensate sensualyte', making them rave like 'braynlesse beestes'. And so he taunted them: 'Se where the heretykes go, Wytlesse wandring to and fro, With te he ta ha bo ho bo ho'.⁴⁰

Such language persisted. William Barlow complained in 1531 that 'the brydle of sensualyte' had been loosed, benefiting 'sedicyous subjectes'.41 Roger Edgeworth in sermons in the late 1530s and early 1540s at Redcliffe Cross in Bristol exclaimed that those who denied transubstantiation were 'addict and wedded to their carnall senses, their fyve wits'. Following St. Paul he called heretics 'carnall folkes' and 'animalis homo', 'whose sences and appetites be depressed and kepte [...] to sensual pleasures'. These folk were 'not much better than brute beasts [...] without brydle or staye'.42 The conservative Miles Hogarde agreed.43 Fisher's belief that the heretic was 'singular' was taken up by William Peryn in the 1540s, who saw 'heresye' as 'wylful and wycked perversitie and obstinate and sensuall syngularitie'.44 In the 1550s the Marian bishop of London, Edmund Bonner, sought out those who avoided communion, calling them 'undevout persones, geven to sensual pleasures and carnal appetites, followynge the lustes of their body'.45 For Hogarde, there was great danger in 'neglectynge the brynging of their affections into bondage'. 46 In Foxe's Book of Martyrs, James Abbas was accused by 'a seruaunt of the Sherifes' in Bury St. Edmunds of being a 'heretike, and a madde man, out of his wit'.47

Because heretical doctrine dissimulated as a kind of theological hearsay, all urged the keeping of the senses. As with idolatry, the battle against heresy was against sensuality. Traditionalists found themselves in the odd situation of advocating the use of the senses to root out heresy, but not to define faith. Heretics were not only overcome by their senses, they actually permitted sense-based opinions to exceed their god-given remit. What worried More was that Englishmen and -women might leave their

⁴⁰ Skelton, A Replycacyon, fols. AIIr-v, AIIIv, BIIr.

⁴¹ Barlow William, A Dyalogue Describing the Originall Ground of these Lutheran Faccyons (1531), fol. i4v.

⁴² Edgeworth, Sermons 233, 240, 290.

 $^{^{43}}$ Hogarde as in Crowley Robert, *The Confutation of the Mishapen Aunswer to the Misnamed, Wicked Ballade, Called the Abuse of ye Blessed Sacrame*[n]t (London, John Daye: 1548), fol. BIIIr.

⁴⁴ Fisher, *A Sermon*, fol. B3r; Peryn William, *Thre Godlye and Notable Sermons* (London, J. Herforde: 1546), fol. CXVv.

⁴⁵ Foxe, Acts and Monuments 923.

⁴⁶ Hogarde, *The Displaying of Protestantes*, fol. 71v.

⁴⁷ Foxe, Acts and Monuments 1717.

godly devotions for 'the fonde bablynge of suche sensuall heretykes'.48 More's call in the 1530s that there was 'never so convenyent' a time 'as now' for the 'good crysten reader' to 'awake and loke [...] with hys owne eyes' retained its potency.⁴⁹ The trap, for Edgeworth in the 1550s, was that heretical doctrine appeared true, allowing reason to be 'overcomme' by 'sensualitie'. Only by keeping one's senses could heresy be avoided.⁵⁰ The call echoed centuries-old rhetoric of the proper use of the senses to discern falsehood, but also to acknowledge its limits in matters of faith. The proof that evangelicals had loose senses, in More's eves, could not be more evident than with Tyndale's use of the phrase 'a feeling faith'.⁵¹ The staunch persecutor of heretics, Bishop John Longland of Lincoln in 1536 urged Christian men 'folowe nott sensualytie: folowe reason, [...] represse thy carnall will, coarce thy bodye'. 52 Later Edgeworth agreed: 'Our bodely wits [...] must be well employed'. 53 Bonner cautioned, 'regard [...] the use of our senses'.54 The interrogators of Richard Woodman in Foxe's account, urged him not to 'trust so muche in your owne wit'. 55 Heretic sensuality was defined by the inability to put sense-based intellection in its place.

4. Captivation of the Senses

Brooks's exclamation to Ridley to 'captivate' his senses clearly drew on the well-established belief that heretics were sensual deviants. A quick survey of the current full-text edition of Early English Books Online suggests, though, that the phrase itself has its own history. Twenty-nine instances of the verb 'captivate' appear in fifteen works from 1473 to 1560. With

⁴⁸ More Thomas, *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, in idem, *Works*, vol. VIII, 71.

⁴⁹ More, The Confutation 140.

⁵⁰ Edgeworth, Sermons 124, 169.

⁵¹ More, *The Confutation* 742–748. More also makes the general accusation against Protestants as being sensual in *The Answer to a Poisoned Book*, in idem, *Works*, vol. XI, 92–94, and *Treatise on the Passion*, in idem, *Works*, vol. XIII, 12. One of the most important instances of this phrase is in *The Apology*, in idem, *Works*, vol. IX, 38.

 $^{^{52}}$ Longland John, A Sermo[n]d [sic] Spoken before the Kynge His Maiestie at Grenwiche (London, n.p.: 1536), fol. HIIr.

⁵³ Edgeworth, Sermons 252.

 $^{^{54}}$ Bonner Edmund, A Profitable and Necessarye Doctrine with Certayne Homelyes Adioyned Therunto Set forth by the Reuerend Father in God (London, John Cawood: 1555), fol. TtIIv.

⁵⁵ Foxe, Acts and Monuments 1606.

few exceptions it is followed by the words senses, wits, reason, or understanding. Though by no means robust, these consistent references to perception suggest a cultural consensus on sensory governance in early- and mid-Tudor England. As we shall see, it was used by both sides in mid-Tudor religious polemic to highlight the need for sensory control, but not necessarily in the same ways. Outside of these works the phrase has been difficult to trace. It has yet to appear in the scant extant transcripts we have of late-fifteenth-century and early-sixteenth-century heresy trials.⁵⁶ Its origin may lie in Netter's fifteenth-century tome, which was popular reading as a summation of orthodoxy by the early-sixteenth century.⁵⁷ In his assault on Lollard scriptural interpretation, he urges his readers 'ut cum scripta divina proferimus, ea non captivemus sensibus nostris, sed eis potius nostros captivemus sensus' – in reading scripture, one ought not to capture it to one's senses, but rather one's senses to it.⁵⁸ The turn of phrase brought together the issues at stake in exegesis as well as sensory governance and agency in perception.

With Netter's summary of orthodoxy it is not unexpected that we find the phrase in traditionalist polemic and works in mid-Tudor England. Oddly enough it does not appear in More's *Dialogue*, but does in his *Confutation*. Deriding the worldly imaginations which 'captyvateth' the translator's 'wyt', More escalates his accusation by remarking that heretics 'be not captivate unto the lawe of God'.⁵⁹ Edgeworth urged 'for it is our parte to captivate our wittes' in a sermon in the late 1530s. Only with the senses 'close[d] [...] up against all thinges that shall be contrary to God's pleasure' would the believer be able to avoid sensuality.⁶⁰ William Peryn, in his 1546 sermon collection, asserted that the faithful must be 'ledde captive and subdue al wyt and reason' and again they 'leadeth captive all theyr senses', especially in terms of the Eucharistic miracle.⁶¹ In his 1556 *Displaying of Protestants*, Hogarde held much the same: 'man' must 'captivate his owne sensualitie and bridle his affections'.⁶²

⁵⁶ For example Trinity College Dublin, MS 775.

⁵⁷ Harvey Margaret, "The Diffusion of the Doctrinale of Thomas Netter in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", in Smith L.M. – Ward B. (eds.), *Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Margaret Gibson* (London: 1991) 284–287.

⁵⁸ Netter, *Doctrinale*, vol. II, 236. For discussion of Netter on scriptural interpretation, reason, and Lollardy, see Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy* 170–178.

⁵⁹ More, The Confutation 121.

⁶⁰ Edgeworth, Sermons 169, 231, 352.

⁶¹ Peryn, Thre Godly & Notable Sermons, fols. 4v, 10r, 19v.

⁶² Hogarde, The Displaying of Protestantes, fol. 28v.

The phrase appears more often in evangelical works. Most frequently reformers suggested either that traditionalists had captivated their senses so fast as to make themselves blind, or that they had not reined them in at all, but allowed images and idols to bridle them instead. In his The Practice of Prelates in 1531, Tyndale complained: 'they make you err and come and do as we tell you and captivate your wits', and despite being 'contrary to scripture: they answer [...] thou must captive thy wit and believe'. The pharisee of traditional religion 'captivateth his wit and understanding to obey holy church'. Here was 'plaine idolatry: [...] here a man is captive, bond, and servant'.63 In later discussions, particularly those on the nature of the Eucharist, evangelicals turned the cry on its head, exclaiming as the evangelical Robert Crowley did in 1548, that 'they have captivated all theyr senses and reasone also to believe the thing that was never taught'. Crowley's colleagues called for their opponents to 'captivate theyr reason'.64 Anthony Gilby in his *Answer* to Stephen Gardiner called the Eucharist a 'straunge miracle' which deluding 'all our senses [...] leade[s] us captyve' to a 'vyle peice of paste'.65 Gilby complained that traditionalists 'would have us wholly captivated [...] in all these thinges'. In a more biting passage, Crowley mocked Hogarde: if his daughter were pregnant would he 'captivate' his 'reason and sences' to 'beleve' she 'is a virgyn?'66 For evangelicals in the 1530s and 1540s, the call to captivate their senses meant permitting them their god-given office of discernment, not binding them to either blindness or idolatry. With a more refined tone Cranmer, in his reply to Stephen Gardiner, asserted the trustworthiness of the senses as exemplified in the disciple Thomas's touching of the risen Christ. 'What availed it to St. Thomas, for the confirmation of Christ's resurrection, that he did put his hand into Christ's side, and felt his wounds, if he might not trust his senses, nor give no credit thereto?'67 The senses must be trusted or else 'is not wine known from beer by the taste'?68 The ardent evangelical, John Hooper, insisted in 1547, 'is God so much the enemy of man, to give him his senses to his destruction? No'.69 Crowley put it quite simply -Christ didn't tell his apostles to captivate their reason or senses.⁷⁰

⁶³ Tyndale, An Answer 8, 61; Tyndale, The Practice of Prelates 290.

⁶⁴ Crowley, The Confutation, fols. bVIv; fIr.

⁶⁵ Gilby, An Answer LXXXII.

⁶⁶ Crowley, *The Confutation*, fol. BIIIv.

⁶⁷ Cranmer, An Answer 255–256.

⁶⁸ Cranmer, An Answer 259–260.

⁶⁹ Hooper, Answer to the Bishop of Winchester's Book 165.

⁷⁰ Crowley, *The Confutation*, fol. BVIr.

Evangelicals, however, also employed as well as altered the phrase to fit their doctrinal positions. Rather than captivating one's senses to the sensible trappings of Mistress Missa, the godly Christian ought, in the words of Miles Coverdale's 1537 *A Goodly Treatise*, to 'captivate and presone his witte, understanding, and wyl wholly under Gods worde'. *A Spyrytuall and Moost Precyouse Pearle* echoed this in 1550: 'captyvate and subdewe oure naturall eyes, wytte, and reason' to God.⁷¹ The point was picked up by others. Gilby urged believers to 'make subjecte our senses and captive our understanding to all trueth of goddess holy word'. Again it appears in 1552 in Hugh Latimer preaching in Lincolnshire: 'captivate our reason and wit to the wisdom of God'. In Latimer we find transition from wits to rationality as the power needing captivation. In contrast to Brooks's exclamation to Ridley, in his trial the same year, 1555, Latimer told his accuser to 'captivate your understanding'.⁷²

Failure to captivate the senses – whether for the traditionalist or the evangelical – resulted in sensuality and was the hallmark of fleshly worldliness. The concern was traditional. Whether you were a heretic or an idolater the effects of sensuality were dullness of wit at best, but more likely, blindness, if not bodily at the very least spiritual. Conservatives quickly concluded that evangelicals, as heretics, might not just be misusing their senses, their doctrine could well have corrupted their wits completely. In his Responsio More wondered whether Luther's senses functioned properly. Only corrupt senses could be the source of such delusion.⁷³ The connection between corrupt belief and corrupt senses and mental illness persisted. Cleansing and keeping one's wits sharp prevented sensory delusion and allowed the wits their role to discern vice. Conservatives rearticulated this position found in medieval devotional texts and regimina like *Jacob's Well.*⁷⁴ Edgeworth prayed for 'clearer wyttes' and that they be 'unexercised and not cumbred' in the battle againt the 'wililye and craftelye' heresies that tried to 'breake in the fortress of our soules'.75

⁷¹ Werdmüller Otto, *A Spyrytuall and Moost Precyouse Pearle* (London, S. Mierdman for Gwalter Lynne: 1550), fol. LXXIr.

⁷² Examination for the Commissioners, in Corrie (ed.), Sermons and Remains 281.

⁷³ Thomas More, *The Answer to a Poisoned Book*, 216; More, *Responsio*, in idem, *Works*, vol. V, 535–537, 569.

⁷⁴ Brandeis A. (ed.), Jacob's Well: An English Treatise on the Cleansing of Man's Conscience (Oxford: 1900) 216.

⁷⁵ Edgeworth, *Sermons* 169, 231, 252.

For evangelicals, the idolatry of the late-medieval Church ensnared the senses with its smoke, bells, and whistles. Just as they co-opted the language of captivation, evangelicals also sought to illustrate that idolatry, as much as heresy, caused illness and eventually insanity. For the reformer and playwright John Bale, the idolater had either lost control of his 'wyttes' or he was 'dronke with excesse'. To Such binging resulted in blindness as one was 'ledde captyve' by 'hys owne wytte'. To Tyndale traditional religiosity corrupted 'the taste of their mouths' making 'sweet to be sour, and sour to be sweet', preventing proper sensory discernment. Likewise, a decade later, Anthony Gilby complained it had 'so captivated your wittes and dulled your understanding that you could not perceive'. Not only was 'the papistical doctrine' of the Mass the 'imaginacions of idle braynes', it actively caused 'dropsie of the mynde'. In 1557 Richard Woodman, on trial for heresy, accused his idolatrous interrogator, Archdeacon Langdal, of being 'out of your wytte'.

5. Mid-Tudor Sensory Culture

Heresy and idolatry in mid-Tudor England possessed a common sensory rhetoric and language, and employed the same kinds of phrases to describe these grave instances of religious and cultural transgression. Set next to one another and bound through their shared allegories, metaphors, and vocabulary, they appear as manifestations of anxiety surrounding sensuality and sensory misgovernance. Indeed, courtly and religious texts suggested heightened attentiveness to sensuality in Henrician England. Paul Bush's 1526 Here Begynneth a Lytell Treatyse, dedicated to Princess Mary, bemoaned the dangers when the 'bridell and the rayne' are loosed, and 'sensualyte ruleth as gouernour principall'. 82 In his Castel of Helthe, and his

⁷⁶ Bale, *The Dysclosynge*, fol. 56v.

⁷⁷ Coverdale Miles, *A Goodly Treatise* (Southwark, James Nicolson: 1537), fols. 31r, 33r–v; Becon, *A Comparison*, 353–355; Gilby, *An Answer*, fol. 19r.

⁷⁸ Tyndale, *An Answer* 5; Gilby, *An Answer*, fol. IIv.

⁷⁹ Gilby, An Answer, fols. XVIIr, XLIIv, CXIIIr.

⁸⁰ Gilby, An Answer, fol. 126r; Thomas, The Vanitee of this World, fol. BIIIr.

⁸¹ Foxe, Acts and Monuments 1602.

⁸² Bush Paul, Here Begynneth a Lytell Treatyse in Englysshe, Called the Extripacion [sic] of Ignorancy. And it treateth and speketh of the ignorance of people, shewyng them howe they are bounde to feare god, to love god, and to honour their prince (London, Richard Pynson: 1526), fol. AIIIr.

1531 *The Boke Named the Governour*,⁸³ Thomas Elyot hammered home that a lack of sensory control 'putte[s] out reyson and knowledge, the eyen of the soule', otherwise, 'men be transformed frome the image of God until a brute beest'.⁸⁴ The sentiments echoed those of Erasmus, especially in chapters three through eight of his *Enchiridion*, and in his widely read *De Civilitate morum puerilium*, which was translated later in 1554.⁸⁵ New renditions of the *Secretum secretorum* continued the theme of the well-ordered governor having well-ordered senses: William Forrest's for the young king Edward in 1548 saw the senses as 'Bayliffes to be bownde'.⁸⁶

The advice to keep one's senses was not limited to princely education and guides to governance, it was taken up in court culture, as well as late Henrician religious policies. Henry Medwall's 1534 *A Goodly Interlude of Nature* also took up the theme with a character Sensualyte who sparred with Reason, Man, and Pryde. So did John Redford's *Wit and Science* of 1540 with its easily distracted character, Wit. Bale's *King Johan* took the matter as one of kingly governance: Nobility confessed he had 'ongodyly kepte' his 'v bodily wytes'. Thomas Elyot called the senses 'servauntes and ministres' to understanding and 'slaves or druges'. 88

With such rhetoric available at court, the expounding of longstanding religious views on sensory control in the semi-official *A Goodly Primer* of 1535 and *The Manual of Prayers* of 1539, warning of the sensual dangers in 'hearing, in tasting, in touching', might be more than presentation of traditional religious values. ⁸⁹ *The King's Primer* of 1545 suggests something more explicit, asserting that the kingdom's senses were 'foully misused

⁸³ Elyot Thomas, *The Boke Named the Governour*, ed. F. Watson (London: 1907) 224–225.

 $^{^{84}}$ Elyot Thomas, Of the Knowledge Which Maketh a Wise Man (London: ca. 1549), fols. 32r–33v, 59r, 71v, and 92v.

⁸⁵ Erasmus Desiderius, *Enchiridion militis christiani*, ed. A.M. O'Donnell (Oxford: 1981) III-VIII, 55–85; Gillingham J., "From Civilitas to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002) 277 n. 61.

⁸⁶ Forrest William, *The Pleasaunt Poesye of Princelie Practise*, in Manzalaoui M.A. (ed.), *Secretum Secretorum: Nine English Versions* (Oxford: 1977) 529.

⁸⁷ Medwall Henry, A Goodly Interlude of Nature Co[m]pylyd by Mayster Henry Medwall Chapleyn to the Ryght Reuerent Father in God Iohan Morton Somtyme Cardynall and Archebyshop of Canterbury (London, William Rastell: 1534); Redford John, The Play of Wit and Science, ed. B. Byram-Wigfield (2004), http://www.ancientgroove.co.uk/books/Playof-Wit.pdf; Bale John, King Johan, in Happe P. (ed.), The Complete Plays of John Bale (Bury St. Edmunds: 1985) 60.

⁸⁸ Thomas, Of the Knowledge, fols. 51r and 91v.

⁸⁹ Burton E., Three Primers Put Forth in the Reign of Henry VIII (Oxford: 1834) 58, 69, 370.

and spent' rather than on God's 'honour and glory'. 90 Coupled with the growing contemporary interest in courtly conduct and Renaissance governance, these trends suggest that Henrician interest in the senses cannot be solely placed in traditional preoccupations of sensory control. Rather, it formed a component of the complex interweaving of humanist and monastic notions of social propriety and civility, but also the clean arraigning of the body itself as godly dwelling place, as essential to contemporary moral culture. 91 Whether characterized as courtliness, civility, or moral conduct, the Henrician court appears to be a milieu particularly sensitive and aware of the dangers of sensuality as much as one filled by those seeking to resolve their own religious affiliations. That sensory control was a matter for court interludes and an element of princely education as much as a concern in official devotional works, illustrates that the 'disciplina corporis of the cloister had become the bodily discipline, the civilitas, of the pious cives'.92 Claims to rational governance of the senses were exemplary of mid-Tudor questions of comeliness, station, and comportment. Both evangelicals and their opponents exploited a shared sensory culture which increasingly made such emphases more and more acute.

Not surprisingly, such sentiments compounded the medieval inheritance, making sensory anxiety an essential factor in late-Henrician pursuits of heresy and idolatry. In terms of religious policy in the late 1530s, Bale's polemic is again suggestive of how not only the fear of the sensual, but also the language surrounding sensuality intersected with the regime's political and religious objectives. The former Carmelite turned polemicist linked idolatry and sodomy with the religious life.⁹³ 'Sexual excess' and idolatry made the religious into the 'apes of Antichrist', beasts traditionally associated with touch and lust. Not surprisingly, sensuality featured among the justifications for the dissolution of monastic foundations, and the razing of monastic shrines in the late 1530s and early 1540s. Alongside political discontent at reform, this rhetoric suggests the dissolution was a recapturing of the nation's wits from sensual excess.⁹⁴ The persecution

⁹⁰ Burton, Three Primers 524.

⁹¹ Knox D., "Erasmus' *De Civilitate* and the Religious Origins of Civility in Protestant Europe", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 86 (1995) 21–42; Thomas K., "Cleanliness and Godliness in Early Modern England", in Fletcher A. – Roberts P. (eds.), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: 1994) 62, 70, 72.

⁹² Knox, "Erasmus' De Civilitate and the Religious Origins of Civility" 42.

⁹³ E.g., Bale, Dysclosynge, fol. 94r.

⁹⁴ Heale M., "Training in Superstition? Monasteries and Popular Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53 (2007) 421–422, 438.

of heretics came alongside the continued attacks on idolatry. The king personally tried John Lambert for heresy on 16 November 1538. A few days later at Lambert's burning, the Crown issued a proclamation not only warning against heresy, but also against idolatry. It ordered the destruction of the shrine of Thomas à Becket in Canterbury, but also intimated that the king was the protector of his subjects' senses. 95 As Peter Marshall has shown in his analyses of the events surrounding Elizabeth Barton, the servants of Sir Thomas Cheyney, and the peculiar case of the priest John Forest, distinction between heresy and idolatry was blurred in the 1530s. Forest was burned for being a heretic papist, and the wood for his fire was an abused image. Barton and Cheyney's servants were seen as heretical by Cranmer and Nicholas Heath for their defence of images. 96 Later in 1540 Elyot lauded Henry's decisiveness with Lambert in his dedication of his Dictionary as a demonstration of kingly wit. The aging humanist firmly bound the royal supremacy, Christological and juridical perception, and royal sensory practice in his panegyric, while deriding Lambert who, like all heretics, had been caught up in 'his owne propre wytte'. 97

Sensory language also framed mid-Tudor evangelical polemical response. Not only was idolatry elided with sensual excess, reformers objecting to Henrician religious policies in the 1540s made use of the equally robust belief that tyranny was also evidence of sensory misrule. In Bale's account of Anne Askew's ordeals and trial for heresy in 1546 Henry and his officers were cast as sensory transgressors. Askew's torturer Thomas Wriothesley was a man caught up in beastly sensuality in his treatment of the gentlewoman, while the king (Bale being careful to put the words in Askew's mouth) was a tyrant with a 'cruel wytt', deluded in his own religious conceits. Later, Foxe added Bonner, the scourge of the godly, to the list of beastly sensual oppressors. A woodcut of a sweaty and dishevelled Bonner beating the evangelical Thomas Hinshaw in his orchard appeared in his 1563 Acts and Monuments. 100

⁹⁵ Hughes P.L. – Larkin J.F. (eds.), *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 3 vols. (New Haven: 1969), vol. I, 270–276.

⁹⁶ Marshall P., "Papist as Heretic: the Burning of John Forest, 1538", *The Historical Journal* 41 (1998) 358.

⁹⁷ Elyot Thomas, *The Dictionary of Syr Thomas Eliot Knyght* (London, Thomas Berthelet: 1538), fols. Ally and AllIr.

 $^{^{98}\,}$ Aquinas Thomas, *De Regno*, in Dyson R.W. (ed.), *Aquinas: Political Writings* (Cambridge: 2002) 14.

⁹⁹ As in McCoy R.C., Alterations of State: Sacred Kingship in the English Reformation (New York: 2002) 20.

¹⁰⁰ Foxe, Acts and Monuments 1701.

6. Conclusion

The consistent and multifaceted use of captivation in discussions of the sensuality of heresy and idolatry indicate anxiety surrounding sensory misgovernance. Heresy and idolatry were construed as sensory practices that transgressed the parameters of Christian propriety in ways common to both reformers and their opponents. In this light Brooks's remark to Ridley is anything but inconsequential. Historically, considering the two as sensual siblings offers new vantages on the religious and cultural conflicts of the 1530s through the 1550s in England. Sensory language exposes ground common to both reformers and their opponents, but also indicates that early Tudor reform owed much to the dynamics of late-medieval piety and its views on sensation. Not only was it an issue of personal morality, the great anxieties surrounding sensation voiced fears of social disruption and pollution that resulted from sensory misgovernance and misuse. The need for rational control of the body and its impulses was essential to both reformers and their opponents. Such common concern and pursuit of sensory propriety, in turn, fundamentally undermines long-held historiographical stereotypes. Not only were evangelical concerns shaped by anxieties surrounding sensuality, their opponents' were as well. While reformers used their senses to root out false religion and feared the sensuality of idolatry, conservatives were equally as fearful that evangelical methods and doctrine bore the hallmarks of the deepest heretical sensory delusion and madness. Both, in their own ways, were firmly grounded in traditional pre-Reformation sensory culture. Evangelicals in these decades were fully reliant on well-established paradigms. It is not only their fear of the sensual in idolatry, but their use of traditional calls to discernment of falsehood that suggests reformers, when it came to sensation, were conservative. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the common language and anxiety shaping heresy and idolatry questions our usual categorizations and analyses. The extent to which scholars construe heresy as intellective and idolatry as bodily exposes implicit belief these forms of transgression were distinct categories. Though such characterization is never explicit, it has prevented us from appreciating the extent to which sensation and cognition were factors in their configuration. Heresy and idolatry in mid-Tudor England cannot be so easily distinguished when seen in the light of contemporary sensory culture and its parameters. For historians a more nuanced appreciation of the sensory connections between heresy and idolatry stands to offer new vantages on mid-Tudor religious contention as it integrates Reformation debates into wider cultural concerns

surrounding morality and civility. Nicholas Ridley, in the eyes of his Marian interrogators and especially James Brooks, needed to captivate his senses because he was a sensual heretic. This accusation grew out of long established paradigms that urged sensory control – the same principles Ridley and his colleagues relied on in their assaults on what they perceived as the idolatrous, sensual, and captivating nature of English traditional piety.

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PART FIVE SENSORY ENVIRONMENTS

PIAZZA SAN MARCO: THEATRE OF THE SENSES, MARKET PLACE OF THE WORLD

Iain Fenlon

Here is the greatest magnificence of architecture to be seene, that of any place under the sunne doth yeelde. Here you may both see all manner of fashions of attire, and heare all the languages of Christendome, besides those that are spoken by the barbarous Ethnickes; the frequencie of people being so great twise a day, betwixt sixe of the clocke in the morning and eleven, and againe betwixt five in the afternoon and eight, that a man may very properly call it [...] a market place of the world.

Thomas Coryate, 1611

As Coryate implies in these remarks, a first reaction to Piazza San Marco in the early modern period was typically visual, taking in the splendour of the buildings that line the square, and then moving on to the colourful variety of the costumes worn by those who populated it. From here his sensory antennae were next alerted to the sounds of the Piazza, a cacophony of speech patterns, dialects, and accents which reveal the cosmopolitan nature of the space where 'all the languages of Christendome' could be heard, 'besides those that are spoken by the barbarous Ethnickes'. To this background rumble of different voices could have been added other features of the soundscape including the songs of street entertainers, the cries of the market vendors (usually specific to the goods on offer), and the hubbub of the tayern. On certain occasions these were interlaced with the bells of the campanile summoning the patricians to meetings in the Ducal Palace, or the chimes of the clock at the entrance to the Merceria marking the divisions of the mercantile day. Sometimes, particularly on important feasts, the rarified music from inside the Basilica would drift out into the square, while on a number of days in the year the ducal procession (andata) would wend its way around the Piazza accompanied by musicians. All this is a reminder that while the human perceptual system in such an environment is principally stoked by visual stimuli, the other senses, particularly hearing (quickly followed by smell) also contributed 332 IAIN FENLON

to the sensory realities of being there. This in turn encourages the realisation that, despite the efforts of historians to explore the totality of the urban experience, consideration of sound (let alone the specific category of music) has remained somewhat isolated from general trends in urban history.

What follows is an attempt to assess the impact of the material and cultural features of the Piazza San Marco, one of the two central urban spaces of early modern Venice (the other being the Rialto to which it is literally, viscerally, and to some extent typologically linked), on the sensory lives of its inhabitants.3 The Piazza was not only the home to a degree of commercial and administrative activity, but also functioned as the focal point of public rituals. Much previous writing about the square has concentrated on its visual qualities, and on the related concept of this most official and formal urban space in the city as an essentially theatrical space, an arena for display and representation through cultural forms and performative acts that were often simultaneously both civic and religious. Perhaps inevitably, that is also the starting point here, since the Piazza San Marco was radically transformed in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries precisely in order to create an appropriately decorous and imposing space in which these activities could be choreographed. However, the ultimate objective is to suggest the ways in which sight, smell, and above all sound, the most basic elements of human interaction, were experienced in this most theatrical of spaces.⁴ In other words, the intention is to imaginatively recreate and in some sense restore the vitality of the square as a site of sensory experience, to put back sound, colour, and motion into the pulsating heart of Venice, an iconic space which the writings of traditional historians have often left dead and silent.

¹ As in Dyos H.J., "Urbanity and Suburbanity", in idem, *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History*, ed. D. Cannadine – D. Reeder (Cambridge: 1982) 19–36.

² For an early study which explores the complexities of urban sound see Attali J., *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis: 1985). See also Gaarioch D., "Sounds of the City: The Soundscape of Early Modern European Towns", *Urban History* 30 (2003) 5–25.

³ For a general and wide-ranging discussion of the issues see the editors' introduction to Cowan A. – Steward J. (eds.), *The City and the Senses: Urban Culture Since 1500* (Aldershot: 2007) 1–22.

⁴ For comparative material relating to the soundscapes of other cities in the period see Smith B.R., "The Soundscapes of Early Modern England: City, Country, Court", in idem, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: 1999), some of the essays in Kisby F. (ed.), *Music and Urban History*, special issue of *Urban History* 29 (2002), and Kisby F., *Music and Musicians in Renaissance Cities and Towns* (Cambridge: 2001), where consideration is restricted to music as conventionally defined.

But we shall begin with the more traditional consideration of the material aspects of the square itself.

The New Rome

In 1570, the Florentine architect Jacopo Sansovino died in Venice, leaving his most ambitious urban project, the remodelling of Piazza San Marco along classical lines, unfinished. Since his appointment as protomagister to the procurators of San Marco some forty years earlier, this had been his principal preoccupation.⁵ Although Andrea Gritti, doge from 1523 until 1538, was undoubtedly the main political force behind the scheme, the overseers of the work on a daily basis were the procurators of San Marco, the next most important office-holders of the state, who lived in the square (as did Sansovino himself), and who could witness the work as it progressed.⁶ Following the trauma of the Venetian defeat at Agnadello in 1509, during the War of the League of Cambrai, and the consequent loss of Venetian prestige, Gritti's aim had been to restore confidence in the city as a great international entrepôt flourishing once again under the benign administration of a model republican regime. In this context, the re-fashioned Piazza was to be the most prominent feature of a spectacular large-scale renovatio urbis which touched many areas of the city; in practice it was not to be brought to final fruition until the seventeenth century.⁷ Physical expression of this concept was to be elaborated through a radical architectural renewal of the central and interconnected civic spaces at San Marco and the Rialto, in order to lend them an appropriate sense of splendour, modernity, magnificence, and auctoritas, secured through the deployment of a classical language strongly influenced by Roman example.8

⁵ See Tafuri M., *Jacopo Sansovino e l'architettura del '500 a Venezia*, 2nd ed. (Padua: 1972); Morresi M., *Jacopo Sansovino* (Milan: 2000).

⁶ For the relationship see Boucher B., "Il Sansovino e i Procuratori di San Marco", *Archivio veneto* 173 (1986) 59–74.

⁷ See Tafuri M. (ed.), *Renovatio urbis': Venetia nell'età di Andrea Gritti, 1523–1538* (Rome: 1984), and some of the individual chapters in Tafuri M., *Venezia e il Rinascimento: Religione, scienza, architettura* (Turin: 1985), trans. as *Venice and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA – London: 1989).

⁸ Calabi D., "Il rinovamento urbano del primo Cinquecento", in Tenenti A. – Tucci U. (eds.), *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della serenissima*, 11 vols. (Rome: 1991–98), vol. V, 101–163.

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As it unfolded, Sansovino's brief was to inaugurate the first phase of a grandiose scheme to line the remaining sides of the Piazza and the Piazzetta, together with the eastern end of the landing quay, known as the Molo, with new structures. This involved completion of the Procuratie Vecchie on the north side of the square, begun by his immediate predecessor Bartolomeo Bon. The final outcome is an attempt to represent, in appropriate architectural language, what historians have come to call the Myth of Venice, the concept of the city as the perfect Republic, unwalled and yet unconquered for a thousand years, ruled for the benefit of all its citizens by a benevolent patrician class.9 At the same time it is also a brave reinterpretation, on a magisterial scale, of the plan of the ancient Roman forum as described by Vitruvius in the Ten Books of Architecture. 10 Fra Giocondo's celebrated illustrated edition of this, the only architectural treatise from classical antiquity to have survived, published in Venice in 1511, had aroused some interest in classical monuments, but it was not until the arrival of Sansovino – who had studied the ruins in situ during his Roman years – that the precepts were put into practice.¹¹ The importance of Sansovino's advocacy of the new style was realised by contemporaries; it is made explicit in Daniele Barbaro's commentaries on the Ten Books, first published in Venice in 1556 with illustrations by the architect Andrea Palladio (1508-1580), where each of Vitruvius's building types is matched to Venetian examples in general, and to Sansovino's work in the Piazza in particular. 12 In symbolic as opposed to stylistic terms the effect was to equate Imperial Venice with Imperial Rome.¹³ In conceptual terms, Sansovino's ambitious project is the most spectacular example of the transformation of urban space reinforcing claims to power through 'the reappropriation of Roman dress for contemporary

⁹ From among the many treatments of the Myth of Venice, its evolution and significance, see Fasoli G., "Nascità di un mito", in *Studi storici in onore di Gioacchino Volpe*, 2 vols. (Florence: 1958), vol. I, 445–479; Gaeta F., "Alcune considerazioni sul mito di Venezia", *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 23 (1961) 58–75; Marx B., "Il mito di Venezia nel primo Cinquecento", in Buck A. – Guthmüller B. (eds.), *La città italiana del Rinascimento fra utopia e realtà* (Venice: 1984) 137–163. Artistic expression of various aspects of the Myth are discussed in Rosand D., *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill – London: 2001).

¹⁰ Hirte T., *Il foro all'antica di Venezia: La trasformazione di Piazza S. Marco nel Cinquecento* (Venice: 1986).

¹¹ Lotz W., "The Roman Legacy in Sansovino's Venetian Buildings", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 22 (1963) 3–12.

¹² D'Evelyn M., "Venice as Vitruvius's City in Daniele Barbaro's Commentaries", *Studi veneziani*, n.s. 32 (1996) 83–104.

¹³ Marx B., Venezia-altera Roma? Ipotesi sull'umanesimo veneziano (Venice: 1978).

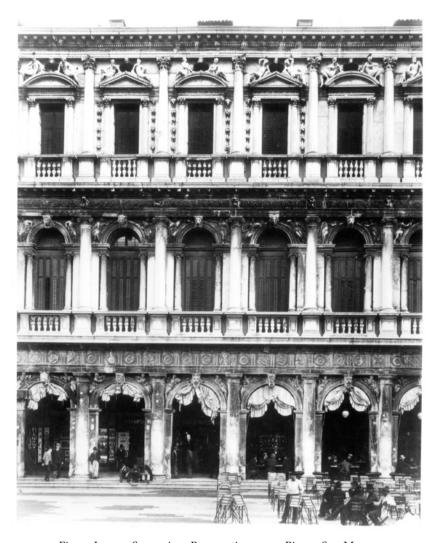


Fig. 1. Jacopo Sansovino, Procuratie nuove. Piazza San Marco.

purposes' [Fig. 1].¹⁴ At the centre of Sansovino's scheme was the Basilica of San Marco, constructed in the final decades of the eleventh century as a grandiloquent expression of Venice's new-found political and economic

¹⁴ Cunliffe E., *The Politics of the Piazza: The History and Meaning of the Italian Square* (Aldershot: 2008) 80, with a discussion of Piazza San Marco on 103–106. For the earlier

status in the upper Adriatic.¹⁵ The effect was regal if not imperial, the analogy here being with Byzantium.¹⁶ Whether approached through the Piazzetta from the lagoon (the true ceremonial entrance to the Piazza), or viewed from the square itself, the first assault on the senses was surely visual. Subsequently embellished by booty removed from Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, the building had been yet further enhanced both internally and externally over the centuries by marble cladding and pictorial mosaics.¹⁷

Although the provision of a suitable resting place for Mark's relics was the main motivation for the foundation of the Basilica, its proximity to the Ducal Palace also gave it a distinct civic meaning. During the centuries which followed the construction of the present building, the third church to be built on the site, the bonds which tied San Marco to both doge and state were strengthened through the evolution of a characteristically Venetian mixture of liturgical and civic rituals. 18 These were enacted mostly in the Basilica, the Piazza and the adjoining Piazzetta, which for these purposes constituted a unified ceremonial space.¹⁹ From there they were also transported to other locations in the city, when the andata, the elaborately choreographed ducal procession which is known to have been a prominent feature of the ceremonial cityscape since at least the late thirteenth century when it was described by the official chronicler Martin da Canal,²⁰ visited sites of particular historical or religious significance. Typically these were parish churches, convents and monasteries, which were often associated with major events in Venetian history, usually military or naval victories. In this way the Piazza functioned as the

history of the square see Agazzi M., *Platea Sancti Marci: I luoghi marciani dall'XI al XIII secolo e la formazione della piazza* (Venice: 1991), and Schulz J., "La piazza medievale di San Marco", *Annali di architettura* 4–5 (1992–1993) 134–156.

¹⁵ Demus O., *The Church of San Marco in Venice: History, Architecture, Sculpture* (Washington, DC: 1960); Demus O. et al., *Le sculture esterne di San Marco* (Milan: 1995); Demus O., *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice*, 2 vols. in 4 (Chicago: 1984).

¹⁶ Pincus D., "Venice and the Two Romes: Byzantium and Rome as a Double Heritage in Venetian Cultural Politics", *Artibus et Historiae* 26 (1992) 101–114.

¹⁷ For the mosaics and sculptural decoration see the works referred to in footnote 15 above. For the use of marble both inside and outside the building see Favaretto I. et al., *Marmi della Basilica di San Marco: Capitelli, plutei, rivestimenti, arredi* (Milan: 2000).

¹⁸ Muir E., Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice (Princeton: 1981); Fenlon I., The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice (New Haven-London: 2007).

¹⁹ Fenlon I., "Magnificence as Civic Image: Music and Ceremonial Space in Early Modern Venice", in Fenlon I., *Music and Culture in Late Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: 2002) 1–23.

²⁰ For the chronicle see Limentani A. (ed.), *Martin da Canal: Les estoires de Venise. Cronaca veneziana in lingua francese dalle origini al 1275* (Florence: 1972).

centre of Venetian devotional and political geography, and as the heart of its ceremonial and ritual life. Taken together, the Basilica, the Ducal Palace and the spaces which surrounded them operated as the focus of an intricate web of religious and civic conceptions, celebrated in a number of distinct processional acts which not only involved the highest officers of church and state, but also involved both the citizens of the city and foreign visitors as observers and, on occasion, participants. In this sense, Piazza San Marco was not merely a ceremonial forecourt to the Basilica, but was also a site of a wide range of communal experiences which united civic and religious values within a recognizable and constantly evolving rhetorical language. As well as being a theatrical stage for the enactment of state rituals, the square was also a highly evocative and emotionally charged space, an arena for collective experiences of all kinds. Here both audience and spectators were surrounded all at once by symbols of political authority, emblems of statehood, and bearers of historical memory, of which the most potent were the four bronze horses from Constantinople which adorned the west façade of the Basilica.²¹ Embedded into the walls of the Basilica, or placed strategically close it where they were invested with new functions and meanings, marble and porphyry fragments served as constant reminders of Venetian imperial status.²² The buildings of Piazza San Marco do not merely frame the square, but are situated within it. To understand the Piazza in an anthropological sense, as a focus of Venetian social, political, and commercial life, it is necessary to consider it as a coherent whole, a vibrant and constantly changing public space that is related both dynamically and organically to the buildings which circumscribe it. Within this single space, different aspects of Venetian society, from its government and bureaucracy to its devotional and commercial life, were present in a coordinated fashion, accessible to all, and clearly demonstrative of an underlying order. The full force of the interlinked civic and religious messages was conveyed by the sheer theatricality of the square and its surroundings.

 21 For the horses of Constantinople see Jacoff M., The Horses of San Marco and the Quadriga of the Lord (Princeton: 1993).

²² See Vickers M., "Wandering Stones: Venice, Constantinople and Athens", in Selig K.L. – Sears E. (eds.), *The Verbal and the Visual: Essays in Honor of William Sebastian Heckscher* (New York: 1990) 225–247; Belorskaya M. – Lapatin K., "Antiquity Consumed: Transformations at San Marco", in Payne A. – Kuttner A. – Smick R. (eds.), *Antiquity and Its Interpreters* (Cambridge: 2000) 83–95.

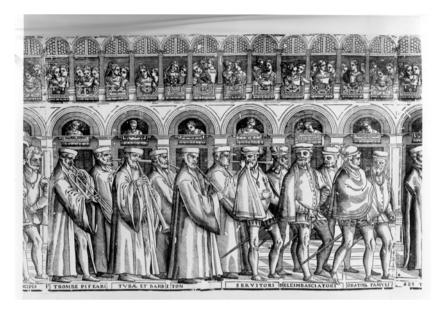


Fig. 2. Matteo Pagan, *Procession in St. Mark's Square* (ca. 1550). Woodcut. Venice, Museo Civico Correr.

Processional Forms

Early modern Venice was a city of processions.²³ The most visible and elaborate of them, the ducal *andata*, was endlessly reproduced in images. Shown in the decorative borders of maps, and described in detail in guidebooks, the experience of the *andata* was available to the Venetians as well as being one of the strongest impressions of the city that visitors took away with them. Beginning with Gentile Bellini's *Procession in St. Mark's Square*, the *andata* is also occasionally shown in paintings. The most detailed visual representation of all is Matteo Pagan's 1556–59 sequence of eight large woodcuts which, when placed in order, present a continuous view of the procession [Fig. 2]. In its fullest version, as recorded in sixteenth-century texts and images, the *andata* included all the principal office-holders of state together with some minor officials, five foreign ambassadors (representing Rome, Vienna, Madrid, Paris and Constantinople), the canons of the Basilica, the patriarch of Venice (on specified

²³ Folgari G., "Processioni veneziane", Dedalo 5 (1924–1925) 775–780.

occasions) and, at the core of the procession, the doge himself.²⁴ In front of him were grouped the chancery servants of the cittadino class, while the nobility, who had been elected into the various magistracies, walked behind. In practice this group of prominent patricians, the only social element of Venetian society that participated directly in the democratic process, were likely to have been drawn from a narrow band of the patriciate in which power, money, and influence were concentrated.²⁵ Strategically positioned close to the doge, they were accompanied by musicians, the ambassadors, standard bearers, and officials carrying the trionfi (ritual objects). Over the course of time, as the question of rank and status as reflected in the ordering of the *andata* became more important, the exact position of each individual office-holder within this structure became more rigidly defined by chroniclers and those responsible for codifying ceremonial detail. Similarly, the primary purpose of Pagan's woodcuts was to fix the relative position of the participants.²⁶ It is striking that the only observers looking down upon the scene are female, a reminder that on such occasions (as well as in other contexts) the square was a strictly gendered space in which relationships based on dominance and subordination were encoded.27

On some occasions, this roster of participants was augmented by other social groups, such as the two main categories of Venetian charitable confraternities (the *scuole grandi* and the *scuole piccole*), the trade guilds, and sometimes even particular parishes. The *scuole grandi* represented the interests of the *cittadino* class, made up of professional men such as doctors, lawyers, civic servants, and prominent merchants.²⁸ On the other hand, the *scuole piccole* were open to the population at large; there were

²⁴ Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City* 123–127.

²⁵ Grendler P., "The Leaders of the Venetian State, 1540–1609: A Prosopographical Analysis", *Studi veneziani*, n.s. 19 (1990) 35–85; Grubb J., "Elite Citizens", in Martin J. – Romano D. (eds.), *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City State*, 1297–1797 (Baltimore – London: 2000) 339–364.

²⁶ Wilson B., *The World in Venice: Print, the City and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: 2005) 66–67. The entire sequence is reproduced in Muir, *Civic Ritual* 194–197, and Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City* 122–123.

²⁷ See Romano D., "Gender and the Urban Geography of Renaissance Venice", *Journal of Social History* 23 (1989) 339–353. For general considerations with some attention to Venice see Davis R.C., "The Geography of Gender in the Renaissance", in Brown J. – Davis R.C., *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy* (London: 1998) 19–38.

²⁸ See Pullan B., Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State to 1620 (Oxford: 1971); Pullan B., "The Scuole Grandi of Venice: Some Further Thoughts", in Verdon T. – Henderson J. (eds.), Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento (Syracuse: 1990) 272–301.

perhaps as many as two hundred of them in the fifteenth century.²⁹ The one hundred or so craft guilds (*Scuole di arti*) fulfilled a similar function, providing solidarity for their members in the workplace, and support in times of sickness and death.³⁰ On one of the most important public and religious festivals of the year, that of Corpus Christi, the guilds were required to participate in the *andata* in Piazza San Marco, one of the most visually spectacular moments of the entire annual cycle. While for many Venetians, membership of a guild and residence in a parish provided defining structures of sociability, identity, and religious experience, on such occasions the Piazza provided a significant focus for collective experiences in which smell and sound played a significant role, from the singing of hymns to the smell of incense and burning wax.

Since all the scuole crossed neighbourhood boundaries and drew their members from across the city as a whole, their presence in the *andata* had the effect not only of broadening participation in a socially more inclusive way, but of fulfilling political objectives by underlining the allegedly harmonious collective organisation of the city, one of the basic concepts that lay behind the Myth of Venice. Similarly, while the presence of the *scuole* in the procession communicated the idea of communal devotion and charity, the participation of the guilds symbolised the complementary notion of trade as the basis of civic concord. For most Venetian citizens, the most meaningful focus of identity in the sixteenth century was not the sestiere (the city was divided into six), which was merely an administrative unit, but the parish, of which there were about seventy; it was the parish, more than any other form of association, that generated a sense of local belonging and identity. The occasional participation of parish representatives in the andata was just one way in which different social and professional groups were incorporated into the ceremonial apparatus and in the process were elevated, albeit briefly, into a position of high visibility. Noticeably absent from these arrangements are mem-

²⁹ Mackenney R., "Continuity and Change in the *scuole piccole* of Venice, c.1250–c.1600", *Renaissance Studies* 8 (1994) 388–403; Mackenney R., "The *scuole piccole* of Venice: Formations and Transformations", in Terpstra N. (ed.), *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternitites and Social Order in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: 2000) 172–189.

³⁰ Mackenney R., "Arti e stato a Venezia tra tardo medioevo e '600", *Studi veneziani*, n.s. 5 (1981) 127–143; Mackenney R. – Humfrey P., "The Venetian Trade Guilds as Patrons of Art in the Renaissance", *Burlington Magazine* 128 (1986) 317–330; Gramigna S. – Perissa A., *Scuole di arti mestieri e devozione a Venezia* (Venice: 1981); Mackenney R., *Tradesmen and Traders: The World of the Guilds in Venice and Europe, c.1250–c.1650* (London – Sydney: 1987).

bers of the foreign communities some of which (the Greeks, Albanians, and Slavs), established their individuality through their own *scuole*, while others (such as the Germans, the Arabs, Turks, and Persians) established warehouses (*fondachi*) where merchants and traders would congregate and transact business. Familiar to us from the paintings of Carpaccio as a significant presence in the city, members of these different ethnic groups participated in Venetian public life, as Coryate noticed. Their presence introduces not only distinct categories of sights and sounds, relating to their own different lives and religious practices, but also raises the question of social status and exclusion.

The *andata* was not a silent affair. On many of the more important feasts in the Venetian calendar, the choir of the San Marco walked in the procession, and so too, on occasion, did the professional singers employed by some of the wealthier *scuole*.³¹ In Bellini's *Procession in Piazza San Marco* of 1496, which shows the Scuola di San Giovanni carrying their prized relic of the True Cross on the feast day of St. Mark, a group of five singers is shown accompanied by an instrumental ensemble.³² In its expanded form, the *andata* could amplify the liturgy outside the Piazza by processing to other areas of the city as well. On these occasions, civic and liturgical rituals associated with the figure of the doges were enacted outside the central civic and religious arena. This allowed the patrician class not only to broaden the audience for official ceremony, but also to knit together the social fabric of the city through communal ritual acts.

Ducal Rites and Public Spectacles

While the *andata* was the most common ritual event to be experienced in the Piazza by both citizens and foreigners alike, it was not the only one. Rites of passage that marked both the investiture and funeral of the doge were also public occasions, witnessed by the crowds of citizens and foreigners crammed into the nave of San Marco, or gathered in the Piazza for the traditional distribution of coins after the ceremony [Fig. 3].³³ The heart of

 $^{^{31}}$ See now Glixon J., Honoring God and the City: Music at the Venetian Confraternities, 1260–1807 (Oxford: 2003).

³² Brown H.M., "On Gentile Bellini's *Processione in San Marco* (1496)", *International Musicological Society Congress Report XII: Berkeley* 1977 (Kassel – London: 1981) 649–658.

³³ The most important contemporary accounts of ducal coronations and funerals are those recorded at the end of the sixteenth century in Archivio di Stato, Venice, Collegio, Ceremoniali I and II, and that drawn up for the maestro del ceremoniale in Biblioteca



Fig. 3. Giacomo Franco, *The Doge Presented to the People* (ca. 1610). Engraving. Venice, Museo Civico Correr.

the ceremony, when the doge took an oath and received the banner of San Marco, appeared on Venetian coinage. Carried in pouches, and exchanged over tables and in shops, this familiar image served as a constant reminder to the Venetians of the central politico-theological concept of the elected head of state as San Marco's representative on earth, and as the principal mediator on behalf of its citizens in times of crisis. These aspects of the office were also much in evidence during the ceremonies that articulated the last three days of Holy Week, culminating in Easter Sunday, when the doge was one of the central actors in the rituals that took place both in the Basilica and outside in the Piazza.³⁴ The semi-sacral nature of the dogeship again came into play during the funeral rites which followed the death of the incumbent, rites which were, to a considerable extent, also conducted in public. The long funeral cortège which wound its way round Piazza San Marco behind the corpse on the day of the deceased doge's internment, included monks and nuns from the monasteries of the city, together with representatives of the scuole piccoli, the nine clerical orders, and members of the doge's family. The six scuole grandi also walked in the procession, with pride of place immediately behind the open coffin being reserved for the members of the scuola to which the doge had belonged. The cortège having arrived in front of the Basilica, the corpse was raised in the air nine times, while the cry went up, 'God have mercy!' and nine doubles rang out from the Campanile. The choreography of these, and the many other public festivities which articulated the year, emphasised the indissolubility of religious and civic value, by inextricably fusing together the political and devotional dimensions of public life. In the course of the annual cycle, the Venetians publicly celebrated the feast days of sixty-five saints and ten moveable feasts. Francesco Sansovino's guidebook records thirteen occasions on which the andata visited churches and monasteries in the city, often to consolidate the ius patronatus. The political nature of these occasions was underlined liturgically since the patriarchino, the rite which was enacted only in San Marco and hence was effectively a liturgy of state, was used in preference to the Roman rite at the point of arrival. At such moments the quasi-sacred nature of the dogeship invested

Nazionale Marciana, MS Lat. III. 172 (2276), fols. 67v–71r. For modern accounts see Da Mosto A., *I dogi di Venezia con particolare riguardo alle loro tombe* (Venice: 1939) xxiii–xxxi; Muir E., "The Doge as *Primus Inter Pares*: Interregnum Rites in Early Sixteenth-Century Venice", in Bertelli S. – Ramakus G. (eds.), *Essays Presented to Myron P. Gilmore*, 2 vols. (Florence: 1978), vol. I, 145–160; Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City* 129–145.

³⁴ Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City*, 145–149.

Venetian civic ritual with a strongly devotional component. One French visitor, Philippe de Comynes, observed in 1495 that Venice 'is the most reverend city that I have ever seen in ecclesiastical matters', 35 while Coryate described it as 'the Jerusalem of Christendome'. 36

Urban Noise, Urban Dirt

Frozen in space and time in engravings and paintings, such official ceremonies of state have helped to consolidate the sense of the Piazza as a purely formal forecourt to the Basilica and the Ducal Palace. Reading the ceremony books and contemplating the evidence of images such as Vecellio's *Procession in the Piazza San Marco* [Fig. 4] only serve to heighten the impression of the square as an ordered and official space, a parade ground for carefully choreographed symbolic state rituals. In part this was its function, but at the same time the Piazza also reverberated to the sounds and smells of less austere activities. These ranged from the buying and selling of produce to the exhortations of charlatans and quacks, and the performances of street entertainers and the cries of hawkers and pedlars.³⁷ Encounters with marginal figures in Venetian society certainly took place in the square, and could lead to sensory experiences that were very different from those envisaged by the procurators and their architects, whose visually concentrated conceptions of the Piazza and limited notions of the activities that were to take place within it were often in conflict with reality. Carefully erased from official images and descriptions of the square, the sights, sounds, and odours of this less formal and ordered life of the Piazza can be reinstated thanks to the observations of foreign visitors, from the records of court proceedings when the procurators moved against lawbreakers and transgressors, and from Marin Sanudo's remarkable diary. Without Sanudo, the engravings of Giacomo Franco, and the comments of early travellers such as Coryate, it would be hard to put the life, noise, and smell of the Piazza back into our imaginative recreations of the square as it was commonly experienced in the early modern period. As so often, much of the evidence relating to the sensory experience of the

³⁵ Kinser S. (ed.), *The Memoirs of Philippe de Commynes*, trans. I. Cazeaux (Columbia, SC: 1973) 562.

³⁶ Coryate Thomas, Coryat's Crudities Hastily Gobled up in Five Moneths Travells in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia (London, William Stansby: 1611) 184.

³⁷ Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City* 111–117.



Fig. 4. Cesare Vecellio, *Piazza San Marco* (ca. 1586). Oil on canvas. Venice, Museo Civico Correr.

Piazza comes from outsiders, whose eyes and ears were attuned to material and cultural differences, and who were ready to make comparisons.³⁸

Among the more riotous of the annual events staged in the square was the celebration of Giovedì Grasso, the last Thursday of carnival (which ends on Shrove Tuesday), when a number of pigs and a bull were released into the Piazzetta.³⁹ There they were remorselessly chased and captured [Fig. 5]. There followed a mock trial, at the end of which the animals were condemned to death by the Magistrato del Proprio, one of the highest legal officers of state. Once sentence had been delivered, the pigs were handed over to members of the blacksmiths' and butchers' guilds for their meat to be cut up and distributed to the crowd. This gruesome spectacle was watched by the doge, together with members of the Signoria and the

 $^{^{38}}$ For the general phenomenon see Burke P., The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy (Cambridge: 1987) 15–24.

³⁹ For the Giovedì Grasso rituals see Sansovino Francesco, *Venezia città nobilissima* [...] *con aggiunta* [...] *da D. Giustiniano Martinioni* (Venice, Steffano Curti: 1663) 406; Michiel G.R., *Le origini delle feste veneziane*, 6 vols. (Milan: 1816), vol. II, 37–41; Muir, *Civic Ritual* 160–164; Muir E., "Manifestazioni e ceremonie nella Venezia di Andrea Gritti", in Tafuri M. (ed.), "*Renovatio urbis*" 61–68; Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City* 110–111.



L'onouedi gasso p memoria di certa uittoria ouenuta d'aRep^{ca}nel friuli si fa pub festa nella piazza di S.m. done assiste il Doge et la Sio p non derrogare all'ătica istituți.

Giacomo Franco Forma con Privilegio >

Fig. 5. Giacomo Franco, *Giovedì Grasso in the Piazzetta* (ca. 1610). Engraving. Venice, Museo Civico Correr.

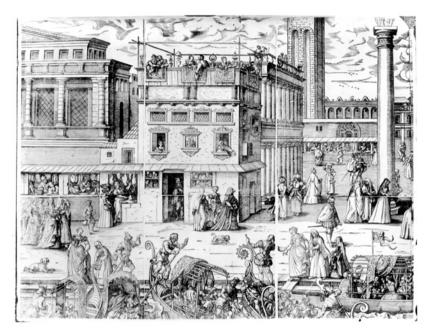


Fig. 6. Jost Amman, *The Piazzetta* (ca. 1565). Engraving. Venice, Museo Civico Correr.

foreign ambassadors, as well as by a large and unruly public. The fresh pork handed out on this occasion was not the only food to be found in the square. There were markets for meat and fish in the vicinity, while next to the Mint stood the huge gothic granaries of the Republic. Taverns and shops selling cheese and salami were strung out along the Molo in the Piazzetta, while directly in front of the west front of the Basilica itself were to be found meat and vegetable stalls. For some of these structures can be seen quite clearly in sixteenth-century engravings and paintings, and are still present in the views of Canaletto and his contemporaries at the end of the eighteenth, in the twilight days of the Republic [Fig. 6]. Throughout the early modern period Sansovino's elegant buildings provided a magisterial background to a central square that was often close in sound, smell, and appearance to an Arab souk.

Once Sansovino's plans for the redevelopment of the Piazza had been adopted by the procurators, it became necessary to clear away some of these eyesores. In theory this should have been comparatively easy, since

⁴⁰ Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City* 112.

most of the premises were owned by the procurators themselves, but in practice matters were more complicated. Rental income from the various shops and stalls was considerable, and in the battle between aesthetics and Mammon the latter frequently triumphed. Some of the tenants had longstanding rights which they refused to relinquish, and since much of the trade catered for the large numbers of foreign visitors and pilgrims who gathered in the square, it was impractical to remove taverns, guesthouses, and money-changing activities without finding alternative sites. Throughout the sixteenth century and beyond, as Sansovino's grand scheme slowly reached completion, frequent attempts were made by the authorities to clean up the Piazza.⁴¹ On one occasion it was even suggested that all commercial activity be completely removed except during the annual fair that took place around the feast of the Ascension (the Sensa). In reality little was achieved. In 1529 the space around the columns was cleared and eight new stalls were provided along the waterfront beyond the Mint for the uprooted fruit and vegetable sellers, but when, at the end of the decade, the bread shops on the library site were demolished, the bakers were simply rehabilitated at the foot of the columns where the greengrocers had been. There they remained for a further ten years until they too were relocated at the base of the Campanile. Although this was not thought to be an ideal solution, the bakeries remained there until they were destroyed in the fire of 1574; even then they were simply rebuilt in the same place. In addition to these legal traders there were also illegal ones, most of whom sold eggs, poultry, fruit, and vegetables. 42 For many of these business was so lucrative, that they could easily afford the penalty and confiscation of goods that the procurators periodically imposed. Eventually, in some desperation, the Council of Ten produced a decree banning all stalls from around the columns and under the arcades of the Ducal Palace. In 1531, the five shops owned by the procurators on the Ponte della Pescaria were being rented to a glazier, a cheesemonger, a fruiterer, and two poulterers;⁴³ they can still be seen there, together with the fish market, in eighteenthcentury views. So too can the stalls in the north-east corner of the Piazza, clustered at the foot of the Torre dell'Orologio and around Alessandro Leopardi's standard bases in front of the Basilica. In addition, according to an ancient right granted at the end of the fourteenth century, sellers

 $^{^{41}\,}$ For the background see Wheeler J., "Stench in Sixteenth-Century Venice", in Cowan – Steward, The City and the Senses 25–38.

⁴² For these, and other examples, see Howard, *Jacopo Sansovino* 11–14.

⁴³ Morresi, Jacopo Sansovino 351-353.

of jewellery and trinkets were allowed to operate in the Piazza on market days. Opposition was occasionally mounted by the guilds, but the right was upheld and the trade continued.⁴⁴

As something of a counterpoint to these mundane and everyday activities, the Piazza was also the site of more sombre occasions, when those convicted of crimes were brought to the Piazzetta to be punished in full view of a curious public. This happened with some regularity, transforming this corner of the square into an arena for the enforcement of the subliminal message that the Republic was an ordered state where violence was controlled, evil was not tolerated and crime was countered with just retribution.⁴⁵ The site between the two columns at the entrance to the Piazzetta from the lagoon was symbolically ideal for these purposes; there the guilty were overseen not only by the statues of Theodore and Mark, the two patron saints of the city, but also by the nearby images of Venecia/Justice on the façades of the Ducal Palace. Accompanying the guilty was a priest and the hooded members of the Scuola di San Fantin, a confraternity dedicated to the charitable task of assisting prisoners on their last journey. As they moved slowly in procession, the members of the Scuola rattled their chains to announce the impending spectacle.⁴⁶ In the case of thieves, this was merely the finale of a much longer and more painful process in which the convicted were taken back to the scene of their crime before having their hands cut off and hung around their necks; in this sorry condition they were then taken to the Piazza to be despatched.

In addition to cures for the body, sustenance for the mind was on offer in the Piazza. Single-sheet broadsides, engravings and pamphlets were hawked by itinerant sellers around the Basilica or under the arcades in the square, who would set out benches to stand on, or put up temporary staging. Once the crowds had gathered, they would be entertained with epic tales or accounts of current events, sung to simple melodic formulas arranged in short verses, while the texts themselves were sometimes printed in crudely produced pamphlets of a few pages, to be sold as souvenirs. In addition to the songs of the strolling players, the Piazza

⁴⁴ Lane F. – Mueller R., *Money and Banking in Renaissance Venice*, 2 vols. (Baltimore – London: 1985–1997), vol. II, 29.

⁴⁵ For which see Ruggiero G., *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick: 1980) 180–182.

⁴⁶ Johnson E.J., "Jacopo Sansovino, Giacomo Torelli and the Theatricality of the Piazzetta", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69 (2000) 436–453, at 445–446.

also resounded to the blandishments of the charlatans and mountebanks who also used music as part of their pitch. Some were properly qualified doctors and professional toothpullers; for them music not only attracted attention and brought in business, but was thought to bring relief from pain and formed part of the healing process. Others were simply quacks and frauds.⁴⁷

Apart from the locals, the Piazza was also a meeting place for foreigners of all kinds, including pilgrims en route for the Holy Land. Italians flocked to Venice to set out on this great spiritual journey, but so too did pilgrims from northern Europe, particularly the English, French, Dutch, and Germans. Before setting out on the journey, pilgrims normally stayed in Venice for some weeks, usually in one of the hostels devoted to the purpose (with each 'nation' having its own), in order to make all the necessary arrangements: money had to be changed, prices and conditions agreed with the ship's master and provisions laid in. Specialised guides, the tolomazi, were to be found lurking around the money-changers' booths at the foot of the Campanile, offering to help with these negotiations in return for a fee; their reputation for sharp practice, made all the easier by language difficulties, was legendary. The pilgrimage trade was a significant part of the commercial activities in and around the Piazza, particularly as spring approached and the galleys were repaired and readied for departure on the new tides.48

In the context of such journeys, arrival in the Holy Land was the culmination of a much more ambitious undertaking in which Venice, and above all the Piazza, played a fundamental role. On the feast of Corpus Christi, on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, those soon to embark for Jerusalem were incorporated into a vast procession which was, in effect, an expanded form of the ducal *andata* [Fig. 7]. Once again, the Piazza became the site of a great spectacle which united different elements of the wider Venetian community, in this case the permanent and the temporary. Some impression of this crowded occasion (thousands must have participated) is provided by an early seventeenth-century engraving by Giacomo Franco, and a number of eyewitness accounts, from which it seems that, as with so much Venetian public ceremonial, its form and content remained

⁴⁷ Goltz M., "The Role of Music on the Stages of Quacks", Ludica 5-6 (2000) 103-115.

⁴⁸ See Tucci U., "Mercanti, viaggiatori, pellegrini nel Quattrocento", in Arnaldi G. – Stocchi M. (eds.), *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols. in 10 parts (Vicenza: 1976–1987), vol. III/2, 317–353; Tucci U., "I servizi marittimi veneziani per il pelegrinaggio in Terrasanta nel medioevo", *Studi veneziani*, n.s. 9 (1985) 43–66.

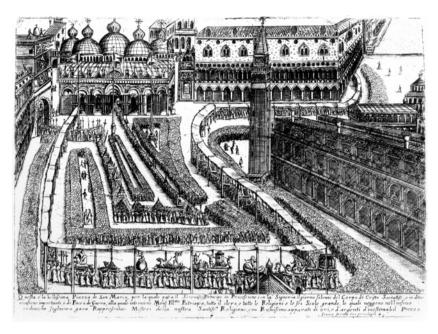


Fig. 7. Giacomo Franco, *Corpus Christi Procession in Piazza San Marco* (ca. 1610). Engraving. Venice, Museo Civico Correr.

largely unchanged throughout the centuries until the arrival of Napoleon. According to the description of the procession written by the Milanese priest Pietro Casola in 1494, each of the *scuole grandi* (there were only five at the time) was represented in the procession by its entire membership, numbering about five hundred, dressed in white habits and accompanied by groups of children who scattered flowers before the doge. Casola's account is remarkably close in scope and details to Bellini's celebrated painting, dated just two years later. Another fifteenth-century pilgrim, Sir Richard Guylforde, records his experience of the event, noting that the pilgrims processed with lyghte in our hands of wexe, of the freshest formynge, geven unto us by the mynysters of the sayde procession'. The power of this unassuming ritual gesture was considerable, since the symbolic meaning of candles, common enough throughout Catholic Europe, carried a quite precise set of meanings in Venice. Frequently carried in

⁴⁹ Newett M.M. (ed.), Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Year 1494 (Manchester: 1907) 146–153.

⁵⁰ Ellis H. (ed.), *The Pylgrymage of Sir Richard Gwylforde to the Holy Land, AD 1506* (London: 1856) 8–9.

procession by members of the confraternities, candles assumed a particular significance in relation to the cult of St. Mark. On the vigil of his feast day, a vespers procession which included the *trionfi* walked around the square and then entered the Basilica where, during the singing of the Magnificat, the doge lit a candle in honour of the Evangelist and placed it on the High Altar.⁵¹ Behind this simple act, which annually renewed the links between Mark and the city, lay the Alexandrine Donation, when the pope had presented the doge with a candle in recognition of this special relationship; this aspect of the Donation and its significance was recalled in turn on every occasion that the andata took place, through the presence of a white candle placed in a strategic position directly in front of a page bearing the ducal corno on a ceremonial cushion. In this context, the presentation of candles to the pilgrims walking in the Corpus Christi procession by the senators who accompanied them took on a greater significance, intensified since the candles themselves were preserved and carried to Jerusalem to be placed in front of the Holy Sepulchre.

In later centuries, when the Venetian pilgrimage trade had dwindled to virtually nothing, each senator in the procession was accompanied by a member of the Venetian poor, who was presented with clothing, money and a candle, the latter gift being a remnant of the historic practice. This process is characteristic of much ritual of the Republic, transforming the universally Christian into the specifically Venetian by appropriating a common festal act celebrated throughout Catholic Europe and investing it with local significance.⁵² In this way Venice became a psychological and symbolic extension of the sacred space of Jerusalem itself, and the ceremonies in the Piazza and the Basilica, carried out in the presence of the doge, became an official benediction of a great spiritual enterprise, fraught with danger for those who undertook it. In effect, the Venetian Corpus Christi procession in the Piazza was an imaginative and characteristic exercise in appropriation, made all the more vivid by the presence of the nearby convent of Santo Sepolcro in the Riva degli Schiavoni. This church, which no longer exists, apparently contained a version of the Holy Sepulchre decorated with the inscription 'Hic Intus Est Corpus Iesu Christi' ('Here lies the Body of Jesus Christ').53 In addition to being a New Byzantium and a New Rome, Venice had become the New Jerusalem.

⁵¹ Muir, Civic Ritual 84.

⁵² For the Corpus Christi rituals in Europe see Rubin M., Corpus Christi: *The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: 1991).

⁵³ Sansovino, Venetia città nobilissima 76–79.

The Sacred City

As well as being a city of processions Venice was also a rich storehouse of relics, two features of its character that were themselves related in terms of ritual action. By the sixteenth century, printed hagiographic manuals such as Pietro de Natali's *Catalagus sanctorum* advertised the enormous variety of relics to be found in Venetian churches, from the right hand of St. Cyprian to the body of St. Lucy.⁵⁴ A party of Dutch pilgrims who visited the city *en route* for the Holy Land in 1525 spent much of their time venerating relics and collecting indulgences, and Giovanni Botero was convinced that in no other city could so many complete relics of saints be worshipped.⁵⁵ For both residents and foreign visitors alike this devotional patrimony was yet a further demonstration of the special character of a divinely protected city.

In the early seventeenth century there was a rejuvenation of interest in relic veneration when five important reliquaries from the Basilica were rediscovered hidden behind a marble panel in the sanctuary. These included samples of the Precious Blood and fragments of the True Cross, together with a number of less important items.⁵⁶ Giovanni Tiepolo, the primicerio of San Marco who was shortly to become the patriarch of Venice, was a strong advocate of Tridentine policy in relation to the display and veneration of relics which were to be prized, coveted, and made the objects of prayer and devotion precisely because of their intercessionary capacity.⁵⁷ To mark this providential discovery, the procurators of St. Mark organized a procession around the Piazza so that the newly discovered relics could be displayed and venerated by the citizens. At three points during the journey the procession was halted so that the relics could be more easily worshipped by the crowds; as it did so the choir of the Basilica, under the direction of its maestro di cappella Claudio Monteverdi, performed a setting of a text in praise of the Precious

⁵⁴ Gallo R., "Reliquie e reliquari veneziani", Rivista di Venezia 13 (1934) 187–204.

⁵⁵ Fenlon I., "Strangers in Paradise: Dutchmen in Venice in 1525", in idem, *Music and Culture* 24–43; Botero Giovanni, *Relatione della republica venetiana con un discorso intorno allo stato della Chiesa* (Venice, Giorgio Varisco: 1605) 105.

⁵⁶ Pincus D., "Christian Relics and the Body Politic: A Thirteenth-Century Relief Plaque in the Church of San Marco", in Rosand D. (ed.), *Interpretazioni veneziane: Studi di storia dell'arte in onore di Michelangelo Muraro* (Venice: 1984) 39–57.

⁵⁷ On Tiepolo see Cozzi G., "Note su Giovanni Tiepolo, primicerio di San Marco e patriarca di Venezia: L'unità ideale della chiesa veneta", in Bertoli B. (ed.), *Chiesa, società, stato a Venezia: Miscellanea di studi in onore di Silvio Tramontin* (Venice: 1994) 121–150.

Blood, 'Pretiosum sanguinem semper laudemus'. Members of the six scuole arandi also walked in the accompanying entourage carrying their traditional torches, as did representatives of a number of Venetian parish churches who also carried portable platforms decorated with statues and other images. Four of the scuole were accompanied by two groups of musicians, one of singers, the other of instrumentalists. Also represented were the nine congregations of secular priests, visible emblems of the ecclesiastical structure of the city, who intoned the Te Deum as they walked. A traditional expression of communal religious exaltation, invariably sung ad improviso on the reception of good tidings, the Te Deum was one of the most familiar features of the communal soundscape. Yet more music was provided later in the procession by four singers, grouped directly in front of the relics, who sang the litany of the saints.⁵⁸ The overall effect was that of a kaleidoscopic sequence of colours, sounds, and smells, as the different elements of the spectacle passed before the onlookers. For its part the crowd responded with prayers, cries for divine assistance, and devotional gestures, adding their voices to the simple chants and intoned liturgies. In these various ways an event of major significance in the spiritual life of the Basilica, involving the rehabilitation of cult objects of great devotional and civic importance, was able to touch the lives of ordinary Venetians. While some participated in the procession itself, enfranchised to do so through membership of a *scuola* or parish, everyone in the Piazza was able to be involved in the event, if only at a distance from the relics themselves. As with so many of the civic and devotional rituals that took place in Piazza San Marco, a form of dialogue between participants and spectators took place, articulated by shared texts underpinned by music. The ideological content of the ritual actions themselves was deliberately devised to unite both protagonists and onlookers in a common experience that simultaneously evoked both the universally Christian and the specifically Venetian. The key concept for everyone was simply to have been present, to have witnessed a great ritual occasion of communal rehabilitation, when relics that had a universal significance were re-appropriated

⁵⁸ These details are taken from Vergaro Giulio Cesare, Racconto dell'apparato et solennità fatta nella ducal chiesa di San Marco di Venetia con l'occasione dell'inventione & espositione del Sangue Pretiosissimo del costato di Christo, del latte della Beata Vergine, con altre santissime reliquie li 28 Maggio 1617 (Venice, Antonio Pinelli: 1617); Suriano Andrea, Breve descrittione del sacro thesoro delle reliquie ritrovate nel santuario della Chiesa Ducale di San Marco, & honorate con solenne processione a 28 di Maggio del 1617 (Venice, Antonio Pinelli: 1617).

and invested with fresh but quintessentially local meanings after years of impotence and neglect.

This episode, whose significance was widely broadcast through pamphlets,⁵⁹ is characteristic of the increased importance of the Piazza and its surrounding buildings as the locus of public devotional activity that is so characteristic of post-Tridentine Venice. In the decades after the closure of the final session of the Council in 1564, the veneration of relics in Venice took on a heightened significance. This was not merely because of their importance in the new spiritual order, but also since the disquieting events of the period made appeals for divine assistance all the more urgent. During the years which stretched from the outbreak of the War of Cyprus, which began in 1565, just one year after the conclusion of the Council, the city experienced not only the joyful news from Lepanto and the celebration surrounding the visit of Henry III of France, but also war, famine, and plague. Bouts of famine were traditionally interpreted as divine retribution for the sins of a wicked and unrepentant people. So too were outbreaks of bubonic plague, and the severe epidemics which gripped the city in the years 1575–1577 (and again in 1630–1631) only intensified Venetian recourse to existing cults. In a wordy disquisition published shortly after the end of the second of these great Venetian plagues, in which a third of the population had perished, Tiepolo attributed the cessation of the plague to the Venetians' devotion to the Virgin on the one hand, and to two local saints, St. Sergius and the recently beatified Lorenzo Giustiniani on the other.60

It was in something of the same spirit that the procurators resolved to restore and rehouse one of the most potent cult objects in the Basilica's collection of relics, the Madonna Nicopeia. This precious Byzantine icon was one of a large number of sculptures and ritual objects, including gold chalices and enamelled book covers, which the Venetians had brought back after the fall of Constantinople in 1204 [Fig. 8]. Since it was believed

⁵⁹ See Vergaro Giulio Cesare, Breve descrittione del sacro thesoro [...] ritrovato con le altre reliquie, il Preciosissimo Sangue che nel giorno della Santiss. Croce si espone (Venice, Antonio Pinelli: 1617); Tiepolo Giovanni, Trattato delle santissime reliquie, ultimamente ritrovate nel santuario della chiesa di San Marco (Venice, Antonio Pinelli: 1617).

⁶⁰ Tiepolo Giovanni, *Dell'ira di Dio e de' flagelli e calamità che per essa vengono al mondo* (Venice, Giacomo Sarzina: 1632).

⁶¹ For which see Rizzi A., "La Madonna Nicopeia", Quaderni della Soprintendenza ai beni culturali e storici di Venezia 8 (1979) 13–19.

⁶² Tramontin S., "Influsso orientale nel culto dei santi a Venezia fino al secolo XV", in Pertusi A. (ed.), *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, 3 vols. (Venice: 1983), vol. I, 817–820. For those that remain in the treasury see Gallo R., *Il tesoro di San Marco e la sua storia*



Fig. 8. Anon., *The Madonna Nicopeia* (early twelfth century). Mixed media. Venice, San Marco.

that the image had brought good fortune to those who had carried it in battle in Asia Minor, it was venerated by the Venetians in the hope that it

⁽Venice – Rome: 1967), and Hahnloser H.R. (ed.), $\it Il\ tesoro\ di\ San\ Marco,\ 2$ vols. (Florence: 1971).

would bring similar blessings upon the Republic.⁶³ Throughout the centuries, the Nicopeia had been carried in procession in the Piazza to beseech the almighty to deliver the city from the plague, or to ensure its success in war. On these occasions the procession took the form of the ducal *andata* with, at its centre, the icon carried under a white baldacchino accompanied by lighted candles. Sanudo records that psalms accompanied by instruments were sung before the Nicopeia, placed in front of the Basilica, in celebration of the victory at Marignano in 1515.⁶⁴ Similarly, during the plague of 1474, the icon was carried around the square on the orders of the Senate, accompanied by all the Venetian clergy and religious orders, the *scuole grandi*, and the flagellant confraternities.⁶⁵

During the second half of the sixteenth century the icon had been kept in the upper sacristy of the Basilica, away from the public gaze, where it is first recorded in 1559. Then, in August 1617, it was decided to draw up a scheme for its restoration and embellishment. The icon itself was adorned with gold, silver, and precious stones. In addition, Tomasso Contin, a minor architect who had been involved in a number of public works, was commissioned to construct two altars immediately west of the iconostasis, according to a single design which would identify them as a pair. That on the north side of the crossing, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, was reserved for the Madonna Nicopeia, now displayed for the first time in its history on its own altar in the spiritual heart of the basilica; the matching altar on the south side was dedicated to the Holy Sacrament. In terms of more general policy, these changes in devotional practice, designed to improve the visibility and accessibility of both the Sacrament and the Nicopeia, were clearly in keeping with the teachings of Trent. Tiepolo, who had been instrumental in orchestrating the celebrations for the rediscovery of the relics in 1617, now publicised the history and efficacy of the Nicopeia in a pamphlet.⁶⁶

In the following decades, the altar of the Madonna Nicopeia, now symbolically displayed in a separate chapel close to the high altar of San Marco, became the focus of both new and rejuvenated traditional ritual

⁶³ Moravio Girolamo, *Panegirico nella translazion dell'imagine della chiesa di S. Marco* (Venice, Antonio Pinelli: 1618), fol. 5v.

⁶⁴ Sanudo M., *I diarii*, ed. R. Fulin et al., 58 vols. (Venice: 1879–1903), vol. XXI, col. 130.

⁶⁵ Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MS It. VII. 8636, which records that the following was sung or chanted: 'Alto re della Gloria, / Cazzé via sta moria, / Per la vostra Passion / Habiene misericordia'.

⁶⁶ Tiepolo Giovanni, *Trattato dell'imagine della Gloriosa Vergine dipinta da San Luca. Conservata già da molti secoli nella Ducal Chiesa di San Marco della Città di Venezia* (Venice, Alessandro Polo: 1618).

practices, particularly during moments of crisis. Displayed for all to see on Contin's new altar, the Nicopeia was now publicly worshipped as a potent protectress of Venice itself; in front of her image prayers were said and litanies sung. As in previous times, it was the Nicopeia that was carried around the Piazza in a formal procession, which necessarily included the doge in order to ensure its efficacy, in times of plague and war. Similarly, times of crop failure and drought were marked by recourse to the Nicopeia; on these occasions too the icon was removed from its chapel and venerated in the square as a major vehicle of divine intercession. By the end of the seventeenth century, a particularly belligerent period in the history of the Republic, the Madonna Nicopeia had been transformed into one of the most important cult objects in the basilica, together with the Pala d'Oro and the tomb of St. Mark.

Both the restoration of the Madonna Nicopeia and the construction of Contin's chapel were clearly in keeping with Tridentine teaching. At the same time, this initiative also reflects the more general increase in Marian devotion that characterised the religious life of Venice during the last decades of the sixteenth century. These devotional emphases are also present in a wide range of Marian compositions written by composers working in Venice; in stylistic terms these range from motets in the new solo song style of the early seventeenth century, to simple litanies. Although Marian motets are a prominent feature of the output of composers working at San Marco in the sixteenth century, there is a noticeable increase in their volume in the period 1619-1630.67 Litanies, perhaps the most characteristic musical expression of Tridentine thought, are also encountered more frequently in this period. As the spirit of the Counter-Reformation gained in strength in Venice, even during the years of the Interdict, there was a noticeable increase in the number of published settings of litanies written by composers associated with the Basilica, including Claudio Monteverdi; his setting of the Litany of Loreto, published in 1620, may have been written for the inauguration of Contin's altar. If this compositional trend, particularly noticeable in the work of Alessandro Grandi, is a reflection of an increased emphasis upon intercession as a fundamental aspect of Venetian civic piety, then something of a critical moment was reached during the plague years of 1575-1577, when the insistence on the efficacy of prayer,

⁶⁷ Moore J.H., "Venezia favorita da Maria': Music for the Madonna Nicopeia and Santa Maria della Salute", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 37 (1984) 299–355, at 299–301.

piety, and penitence induced an intense atmosphere of collective devotion strongly framed by Tridentine thought. There are plenty of recorded instances of communal expiation in action during these years. In the summer of 1576, significantly on the feast of San Rocco, a large crowd gathered in the piazza in front of the church and *scuola grande* that bears his name. Each of the seventy Venetian parishes was represented by a delegation made up of ordinary parishioners, *cittadini*, and patricians, evidently a conscious attempt to include the three estates which made up Venetian society. Led by a priest carrying a cross, these groups formed a procession of atonement which, as it walked, recited prayers and chanted liturgies.

In the more desperate surroundings of the Lazzaretto Nuovo, one of the two plague hospitals in the lagoon, every evening was marked by the voices of the afflicted singing psalms and litanies in, according to Francesco Sansovino, 'una harmonia mirabile di diversi voci' ('an admirable harmony of different voices'). In its encouragement of traditional public demonstrations of piety and repentance as one of the main weapons to combat the epidemic, the ecclesiastical authorities ran contrary to some medical opinion, which was wary of free public association believing it only to encourage the spread of the disease. There was widespread acceptance of the traditional belief that all pestilence was a sign of divine wrath, a form of retribution delivered upon a sinful nation. The only recourse was to prayer and repentance, and while amulets, charms, and written prayers worn on the body could protect the individual, processions and the worship of relics were considered to be fundamental antidotes in the public sphere. In September 1576, after a fierce summer which had seen the plague at its worst, the Senate decreed that the doge, accompanied by the high officers of state, should process around the Piazza on three successive days. On the first the Blessed Sacrament was carried, on the second the procession was led by a crucifix containing a fragment of the True Cross, and on the third the Madonna Nicopeia was processionally venerated. The rubrics of the Venetian procession in tempore pestis largely follow the Roman rite, but also specify a prayer addressed to St. Mark, to finish with the Salve Regina.⁶⁸ In this way, the intercession was sought not only of the Communion of Saints, but also of the two major protectors of the city. A strong sense of the respublica Christiana, an integrated state of mind in which a strong attachment to both Church and state overlapped

⁶⁸ For the texts see *Litaniae secundum consuetudinem ducalis ecclesiae Sancti Marci* (Venice, Pinelli: 1719).

to the point of indissolubility, had long been a feature of the Venetian mentality, carefully fostered by both the ecclesiastical and civic authorities. But as the official reaction to the plague of 1575–1577, which culminated in the decision to build the votive church of the Redentore and to institute an annual *andata* to it, so powerfully demonstrates, it was in the decades after Trent that the Piazza San Marco, and the Basilica to which it was umbilically connected, were increasingly brought into play as the central spaces for the assertion of new emphases. In this new formulation the Myth of Venice underwent a further transformation, and Venice itself became the City of God.

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A NEAPOLITAN HEAVEN: THE SENSORY UNIVERSE OF G.B. GIUSTINIANI*

Wietse de Boer

In the Easter season of 1654, the Theatine Giovanni Battista Giustiniani delivered eighteen lectures in his order's church of the Santi Apostoli in Naples. He took the celebration of Christ's resurrection as an occasion to discuss the physical revival of humans in paradise. His views rested largely on the foundations of medieval eschatology, particularly the notion that survival and identity in the hereafter was of body as much as of soul.¹ This also entailed the perfect reconstitution of the five senses. In two lectures on the subject, the Theatine's oratory culminated in the promise that the blessed would perceive and enjoy not only the spiritual qualities but also the physical wonders of the empyrean – the outermost heavenly sphere, the luminous realm of God, saints, and angels.²

Giustiniani's sermons stand at the intersection of theology and religious practice, of speculative thought and ideology in action. They raise important questions relevant to the history of early-modern sense perception. Is it possible to read Giustiniani's speculations about the senses in the hereafter as indexes of views or concerns about the here-and-now? To what extent were his ideas true to their medieval-scholastic origins? And to what extent did they reflect trends in seventeenth-century religion,

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¹ Bynum C.W., "Material Continuity, Personal Survival and the Resurrection of the Body: A Scholastic Discussion in Its Medieval and Modern Contexts", in eadem, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: 1991) 239–298.

² Giustiniani Giovanni Battista, *Lo stato de corpi beati nell'empireo. Spiegato in diciotto lettioni dette nel tempo pascale nella Chiesa di Santi Apostoli di Napoli* [...] *nelle quali con dottrine curiose, concetti, et eruditioni pellegrine si discorre della resurrettione degli eletti, e delle loro felicità, e glorie accidentali* (Naples, Camillo Cavallo: 1654) 213–228 ("Lettione decimaquarta [...] Della felicità de i cinque sentimenti de corpi beati, e particolarmente della vista") and 229–244 ("Lettione decimaquinta [...] De i diletti sovrani, che haveranno i Beati negl'altri quattro sentimenti esteriori dell'udito, odorato, gusto, e tatto"). Henceforth, in-text citations of this work will be followed by the corresponding page numbers in this edition. Unless otherwise noted, translations of this and other works are mine.

culture, and politics? One need think only of the Galilean revolution, the European explorations of hitherto unknown lands, or the Baroque redefinitions of artistic media – all phenomena to which Giustiniani referred – to suspect that such trends must have affected traditional assumptions about the universe, the body, and sensory experience. If this is so, the question is how.

One promising way to consider this question is offered by the study of paradise – that vast projection screen of human expectations, hopes, and aspirations. Jean Delumeau, in his panoramic Histoire du paradis, has noted two Reformation-era developments. On the one hand, reformminded Christians, including Erasmus, Luther, Marguerite de Navarre, and Calvin, warned against all too eager longings and literal imaginings whether of the lost Eden, New World utopias, or the heavenly Jerusalem – based on the inadequacy of our senses to anticipate heaven. As St. Paul had said, mere mortals could not know 'what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him' (I Cor. 2:9). On the other hand, even where such warnings remained ineffective, such as in the Catholic Baroque, the trend was toward interiorization of the vision of God rather than description of its appearance; artistic representation focused more on the ascent of the soul than the depiction of the heavenly realm. The contemporary upheavals in geography and astronomy (Delumeau suggested) contributed significantly to the crisis of a medieval cosmology that had superimposed the hereafter onto the physical maps of the earth and the universe. Yet the picture is complicated by the stubborn endurance, even in the midst of the Copernican revolution, of a theological system that continued to see the empyrean as a fixed place in the incorruptible heavens. In this regard, the father of neo-scholasticism, Francisco Suárez, was not far removed from Thomas Aquinas.³

This contribution studies the issue of sense perception to test Delumeau's hypothesis and, in the process, to learn more about religious attitudes regarding sensation. It does so by examining Giustiniani's lectures with two complementary approaches. One is to locate the preacher's views within the deep tradition of Catholic theology; this will require us to understand his study and citation practices. The other approach is to elucidate the context-specific aspects of Giustiniani's views by clarifying his biography, the circumstances of his sermonizing efforts, and his ref-

³ Delumeau J., Une histoire du paradis, 3 vols. (Paris: 1992-2000), vol. III, 385-389.

erences to the culture of his day. This analysis will show that the concerns Giustiniani brings to our attention are not only cosmological and eschatological, but also and especially moral – an aspect scholars have frequently neglected.⁴ The problem of sense experience forced not only epistemological choices – whether Aristotelian-scholastic, empiricist, or other – but also positions on human conduct and social relations. The subtext frequently revolved around bodily and social discipline, inasmuch as the senses were seen as critical mediators between body and soul. As Giustiniani's lectures show, these concerns reached even into the most exalted visions of the afterlife. Hence the paradoxical idea of imagining paradise, especially within meditations on the Last Things, as a component of ascetic practice.⁵

Giustiniani as Author

When Giustiniani delivered his lectures on paradise, he was seventy-seven years old. The Genoese-born orator (1577–1658), a son of the patrician Giustiniani family, had joined the Theatines, barely a teenager, in 1591. He had gained renown as a scholar and preacher, the fruit of spending 'fifty years among parchments, to the delight and satisfaction of his audiences'. But it was only late in life that he came to publish some of his work. It fitted the mould of the ascetic literature produced by the Neapolitan Theatines in that it meant 'to support the devotions [...] they spread, and the glory of their order'.

⁴ Max Wildiers is among the few to have sketched – at least in its intellectual-historical outlines – the moral crisis provoked by the astronomical revolution: Wildiers N.M., *The Theologian and His Universe: Theology and Cosmology from the Middle Ages to the Present* [orig. *Wereldbeeld en Teologie van de Middeleeuwen tot vandaag*, 1977], trans. P. Dunphy (New York: 1982).

⁵ See now Göttler C., Last Things: Art and the Religious Imagination in the Age of Reform (Turnhout: 2010).

⁶ Vezzosi Antonio Francesco, *I scrittori de' Cherici Regolari detti Teatini*, 2 vols. (Rome, Stamperia della Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda Fide: 1780), vol. I, 404–406. This account derives from Silos Giuseppe, *Historiarum Clericorum Regularium a congregatione condita*, vol. 3 (Palermo, Pietro dell'Isola: 1666) 591–592 and Giustiniani Michele, *Scrittori liguri* [...] (Rome, Nicol'Angelo Tinassi: 1667) 328–331 (itself largely based on Silos). The quote is from Soprani Raffaele, *Li scrittori della Liguria e particolarmente della Marittima* (Genoa, Pietro Giovanni Calenzani: 1667) 148–149.

⁷ De Maio R., Società e vita religiosa a Napoli nell'età moderna (1656–1799) (Naples: 1971) 111.

As we shall see, this was also the case for his Easter lectures, which, after obtaining ecclesiastical approval in August 1654, appeared under the title *Lo stato de corpi beati nell'empireo*. In another sign of the author's high place in society, he dedicated the work to the abbess of the prestigious Neapolitan nunnery of S. Gregorio Armeno (or S. Ligorio), who was none other than his own niece Virginia Pignatelli, a member of the city's highest aristocracy. True to his reputation, Giustiniani was clearly an erudite scholar. His work is littered with citations, often in Latin and accompanied by source references from a wide array of authorities – ranging from ancient classics, biblical texts, patristic authorities, scholastic theologians, all the way to seventeenth-century authors, particularly from the Jesuit neo-scholastic school. This citation practice was deliberate. In another work of the same period, he took care to explain it as follows:

I could have done what thieves do: when they steal a silver vase, they cut it up and change its form, so as to conceal the theft and sell it as if it were their own possession. But whenever I came across a good, well-explained idea, I wanted to give it to you in the author's own explanation and words, because I did not want to destroy the finished product (*la manifattura*), which at times is worth more than the material itself. I take pride in this kind of theft, which in fact cannot be called theft, because it honours the author.⁸

Yet this remarkable condemnation of plagiarism is misleading. For all their acknowledged citations, Giustiniani's lectures on the senses rested largely on one source – a systematic work of Catholic eschatology, entitled *Empyreologia*, by the Spanish Jesuit Gabriel de Henao (1611–1704). Henao, a professor at the University of Salamanca, had composed his massive compendium as a reference work for 'philosophers, scholastic theologians, interpreters of the Bible, and preachers of the Word of God'. Stationed in Spanish Naples, Giustiniani had mined this authoritative product of Iberian theology, within two years after its publication, for arguments, quotations, and sources. And this was probably just the kind of usage Henao had envisaged.⁹ But for our analysis this fact has major implications. Clearly,

⁸ Giustiniani Giovanni Battista, *Il tempio lauretano. Parte seconda, ove pure a due chori se seguita a cantare le Letanie della Beata Vergine* [...] (Naples, Camillo Cavallo: 1655), "Amico lettore" (unpaginated).

⁹ Henao Gabriel de, Empyreologia seu philosophia christiana de empyreo caelo. Novum opus, maximeque necessarium philosophis, theologis scholasticis, et mysticis, interpretibus sacrarum litterarum, concionatoribusque divini verbi, 2 vols. (Lyon, Philippe Borde, Laurent Arnaud and Claude Rigaud: 1652). The sections Giustiniani mined methodically, albeit selectively, are from pars 2, liber VIII ("De externis actionibus et internis materialibus incolarum empyrei"), 214–270 (exercitatio 28, devoted to vision) and 271–306 (exercitationes 29–32, dedicated to the other senses). Occasionally, he consulted other parts of

Giustiniani's ideas were hardly original, nor were they meant to be so: the point was precisely to ground them in accepted Catholic tradition. But what is left after allowing for what was really Henao's work, not Giustiniani's? Actually, and fortunately for our interpretive effort, Giustiniani did not entirely follow his major source. Thus it is especially in the framing and the interstices of his discourse – the side remarks, the emphases, the introductions, and conclusions – that we can hear with some confidence the timbre of Giustiniani's voice. In what follows we will seek to reconstruct the moral and political agenda it expressed.

The Empyrean, a Sensory Realm

Giustiniani's traditional theological framework is perhaps best established by considering a remark that appears to suggest the opposite. In a digression from his principal authority (Henao), he referred to the scientific revolution. Thanks to Galileo's telescope, the preacher noted,

many people believe they can see mountains, valleys, and vast habitations, [although] I do not know whether they see this accurately or not; I do know, however, that the celestial bodies contain beautiful things, contraptions (*machine*), wonders, mausoleums, pyramids, obelisks, arches, and theatres [...] that God's hand has built in the heavens [...] (225).

Midway through this sentence he recognized the insufficiency of 'these improper terms – since I do not have any others – to suggest the barest outlines of those beautiful things' (225). Galileo's observations scarcely seem to have disturbed Giustiniani's material understanding of the celestial order, which he consciously described in metaphorical rather than empirical terms. For him, the telescope revealed at best a few particulars of the cosmic realm of wonders. The reference provides a telling commentary on the reception of one of Galileo's major breakthroughs. It is no surprise to see the new optics cited by a learned preacher. After all, the *Imprese sacre* (1615–1635), the influential work on sacred oratory by Giustiniani's fellow-Theatine Paolo Aresi, had integrated with relative openness the discoveries of the new science into an overarching theological and ethical worldview. Around the same time, the telescope had made

Henao's work: for instance, his excursus on the physical properties of angels ("Lettione Decimaquarta" 221–222) is based on Henao's exercitatio 26, Empyreologia vol. II, 210–211.

Ardissino E., "La retorica 'ingegnosa': 'Secreti della natura', novità scientifiche e predicazione nell'Italia barocca", in Barbieri E. – Zardin D. (eds.), Libri, biblioteche e cultura

its appearance in other emblematic works, such as those by Giovanni Ferro and Hermann Hugo.¹¹ However, Giustiniani's remark appears to reflect a more restrictive attitude that had emerged among Catholic scholars by mid-century. The Jesuit Giovanni Battista Riccioli summed it up by acknowledging the importance of Galileo's telescope, and 'the discovery by its means of many things that were invisible to the ancients', while firmly rejecting his Copernican system.¹² Theatine intellectuals reflected this same trend: in 1652 the Neapolitan Antonio Pignatelli penned an astronomical treatise 'following the judgment of [Ptolemy] and the holy fathers Thomas, Ambrose, and others'.¹³ Giustiniani, who surely must have known Pignatelli (a likely relative of his), echoed this attitude in endorsing the traditional union of cosmology and eschatology. Even without referring to the dangerous implications of Galileo's work, his lectures represented – as did Henao's massive compendium – a retreat toward the core principles of scholasticism.

Giustiniani's cautious reference to Galileo's telescope nevertheless served his orthodox, and largely derivative, scheme in one important way: it suggested that the empyrean was not only a spiritual realm but also a physical – hence observable – space. This reinforced the speaker's theological premise that in heaven the body was perfectly and integrally restored. He explained this notion as follows. The blessed awaited not perpetual ecstasy and alienation from the senses, but to the contrary, a state in which all five senses were employed fully and at their highest level. This was not to say that the senses could perceive all there was in paradise. Since this faculty pertains to corporeal things (just as the intellect knows spiritual things), the bodily senses could apprehend only what has material

nell'Italia del Cinque e Seicento (Milan: 2002) 255–280. Wildiers, *The Theologian* 131–134 and 140–148, notes that theologians like Leonardus Lessius had shown initial interest in astronomical observation, but reversed course after the condemnation of Copernicanism in 1616.

¹¹ Göttler, *Last Things* 5–11; 18–22.

¹² Finocchiaro M.A., *Retrying Galileo*, 1633–1992 (Berkeley: 2005) 80–83; Riccioli's statement (ibid. 83) is from his assessment of Galileo in his influential *Almagestum Novum* (1651).

¹³ Pignatelli's unpublished manuscript, *Tractatus de sphera universi, et eius schemate iuxta doctrinam Ptholomei, ad quem adduntur astrologicorum libri duo, iuxta sententiam eiusdem auctoris ac sanctorum patrum Thomae, Ambrosii et aliorum. Anno Domini MDCLII,* is cited in Masetti Zannini G.L., "I teatini, la nuova scienza e la nuova filosofia in Italia (note e ricerche d'archivio)", *Regnum Dei* 89–90 (1967) 3–153, at 37. On the Theatines' involvement with the Galileo affair, and their subsequent anti-Galilean polemics, see ibid. 22–37; this did not exclude an interest in the telescope, e.g. in an author like Girolamo Vitale (ibid. 33–34), on whom see more below.

form. For vision (the subject of the first lecture) this entailed significant exclusions: God and other spiritual beings were reserved for the 'mind's eves' ('gl'occhi della mente'). But with their corporeal eves the blessed could see Christ in his humanity, along with the Virgin Mary, the martyrs, confessors, other glorified bodies, and the physical splendours of the cosmos. Even the angels, while spiritual beings, would assume bodily form to delight the blessed; likewise, the heavenly spheres provided enjoyment in all their physical manifestations. And Giustiniani carefully considered the difficult questions raised by these propositions. Was Christ visible to all, even at great distances, and from all corners of paradise? Was this vision continuous, or could it be interrupted? As he elaborated on such questions, Giustiniani relied heavily on Henao's Empyreologia, mining the work for apposite quotes from previous authorities. He continued doing so, albeit in a more eclectic fashion, as he turned to the other senses in his second lecture. There he discussed the language(s) spoken in paradise, the possibility of sound in an airless environment, and the role of speech in binding the blessed together in 'a human and political community' (234). Instrumental music, song, and applause, offered up in praise of the Creator, rounded out the joys of hearing along with the sounds of the celestial spheres. Delightful smells abounded in the empyrean as well, both as the bodily fragrance of the blessed and, likely, the heavenly equivalent of 'flower gardens and fields'; in the absence of air, however, they spread differently than earthly smells, and were in fact of 'different condition' (241). Along similar lines, taste and touch were supposed to return in perfect form as well. But here a moral consideration intervened.

Sensory Restraints

In fact, amidst all technicality and learned citation, it is easy to overlook in Giustiniani's lectures a moral agenda largely absent from his principal source. The preacher announced it briefly at the outset of his work:

I confess honestly that I have experienced in myself something claimed by the great astrologer Julius Firmicus: the consideration of celestial things produced in his heart a great disdain for all things worldly, and a great desire for those pertaining to heaven.¹⁴

Giustiniani, Lo stato de corpi beati, "Al lettor" (unpaginated). The reference is to Julius Firmicus Maternus, the fourth-century astrologer and Christian apologist. In his Mathesis,

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In his lectures on the senses, Giustianiani articulated this agenda according to two principles. First, the perception of humans on earth was inferior to that reconstituted in paradise. This was the starting point of Giustiniani's lecture on vision. Down here (he echoed a humanistic trope) the lynx and the eagle have superior eyesight, the boar has sharper ears, and the spider more sensitive touch than man. The explanation (based on Henao) was that human sensation had emerged diminished from Adam's fall. These faculties, however, were to be restored to perfection, and with absolute superiority over those of other animals, in paradise: 'What sin took away will be returned to us in our state of glory to our great benefit' (215). But this prospect was not guaranteed, being limited to the deserving.

The second principle, then, rested on the idea of reward. It assumed that the senses, corrupted in their earthly incarnation, should be mortified in life, with the promise of generous recompense after death. Giustiniani first revealed this assumption in a passing but emphatic remark about angels in paradise. In offering themselves to the eyes of the blessed, the angels would justly reward those who during their earthly existence had practised sense withdrawal, by providing 'every possible enjoyment to their very same senses' (221). Of course, the opposite was also true: those who had spurned such a life of abstention would suffer the reverse consequences in the torments of hell. Giustiniani's optical interest briefly resurfaced as he pondered the possibility that the blessed could enhance their moral satisfaction by observing the suffering of the damned. But will 'the blessed eye extend far enough to see the punishments of the damned locked up in the infernal Vesuvius?' (226). For him the answer was affirmative. It was certainly possible, through supernatural means, for the blessed to peek into the depths of hell. Not only did Christ have the power to strengthen their eyesight to this effect, but the blessed might also travel 'naturally' to the abyss, and there 'naturally' see the damned.

These principles led seamlessly to Giustiniani's lesson for the living: we had better make sure 'that this corporeal eye, in this life, will not make us weep one day with Jeremiah, who said, "Oculus meus depredatus est animam meam" ["My eyes have ravaged my soul", cf. *Lam.* 3:51]' (227–228). This call for an ascetic lifestyle was not derived from Henao, Giustiniani's immediate source (although, as we shall see, it was widespread in contemporary devotional literature). It returned even more emphatically

he had famously defended his discipline from charges of immorality. See Firmicus Maternus, *Mathesis. Tome I, Livres I–II*, ed. and trans. P. Monat (Paris: 1992) esp. 68–69.

in the second lecture. The glorification of the soul (Giustiniani set out to argue) would be incomplete if its sensitive part did not return along with its rational part. This in turn required physical objects of perception 'proportionate' to each of the senses. The principle of proportionality applied also, inversely, to the use of the same senses during life. Since the earthly suffering of the martyrs and the asceticism of the religious affected especially their external senses, it was only just that the senses would be rewarded accordingly in heaven. Here Giustiniani turned again to Henao to fill in the details. Thus, participation in the heavenly republic induced an unstoppable 'torrent of happiness' that found an outlet in speech. Not all speech was blissful, however: like vision, it turned its attention to hell to 'talk about the state of the damned, and their miseries, and the mercy God showed to [the blessed] themselves' (234). Similarly, the delights of heavenly smell contrasted sharply with the foul odours of hell.

Yet the perfect symmetries at work in the reconstitution of vision, hearing, and smell – earth versus heaven, hell versus paradise – began to disintegrate as Giustiniani turned to taste and touch. Here his discourse suddenly became normative. 'Many theologians say that this type of pleasures should be banished from the eternal city', he noted, referring to Bonaventure, Aguinas, and Alonso of Avila. 'I, too, say: those pleasures that have an impure element should be excluded from the holy city; they should be left to the paradise of the Muslims' (242). This polemical note is obviously worth our attention; we shall return to it later. Relevant here is that the new insistence on purity unbalanced Giustiniani's discourse. He hastened to defend the preservation of taste and touch to the extent that they were pure. The argument was the same as one he had made previously: Why should these two senses, which were mortified more than the others in life, be less well rewarded [in heaven]?' Yet as he proceeded to describe the 'pure' forms of taste and touch, his language became tentative and abstract: the blessed would drink 'a certain tasty humour' or a 'celestial liquid'; they would 'feel in their mouths a great sweetness also when fasting', suggesting that food might not be so abundant in heaven, after all. Touch, too, promised its rewards - 'not sordid, not impure, not vile, not worthy of a paradise of the Turks' – but required that 'the flesh is spiritualized, as it were, and the body is made angel-like' (242-243). Thus an argument whose premise was the survival of the body and the bodily senses, ended up offering, if not its opposite, at least a much more ambivalent prospect, hemmed in by disciplinary concerns and restrictions. What was left for the 'spiritualized' form of touch? Giustiniani's answer sounds outright defensive:

Do you think it is little consolation to go see Christ, kiss his feet and, a thousand times thousand times, the scars of his wounds, which he preserved in his holiest humanity? Does it seem a small pleasure sometimes to kiss the feet and hands of the Virgin Mary? (243)

And even this restricted use of touch raised objections, such as those of Francisco Suárez, who argued that it implied inappropriate familiarity. It might be acceptable with Christ (apparently not with the Virgin Mary), but certainly should not extend to 'embraces, however holy'. What remained was the undivided pleasure of experiencing the 'beautiful and fluid parts of the empyrean' itself – the equivalent of the earthly sensations of air and water on the skin – and no lack of celestial orbs and planets to touch. Clearly, the preacher had lost the confidence with which he had opened his exposé. In closing he cited St. Paul's dictum about the impossibility of knowing paradise.

A Tradition Transformed

The impressive apparatus of Giustiniani's citations, albeit largely derived from Henao's *Empyreologia*, makes it obvious that he wished to anchor his discussion to the bedrock of Catholic tradition. To this we now turn to gain a long-term perspective on the ideas that undergirded his outlooks. This analysis may not only evidence the continuities he implicitly claimed but also point to major changes in the tradition he appropriated. I focus here on one citation, both lengthy and deliberate, that derived most likely from his personal consultation of the original source.

Giustiniani ended his second lecture on the senses with a lyrical flourish, describing the experience of paradise in words borrowed from the fifteenth-century Venetian patriarch Lorenzo Giustiniani. Specifically, he quoted from the latter's treatise *De disciplina et perfectione monasticae conversationis*, composed between 1425 and 1426.¹⁵ In it, the leader of the Celestini (the Canons Regular of San Giorgio in Alga) moved from a discussion about proper ascetic practice to a discussion of the joys of heaven. This framework seems to suggest a conception of paradise similar to that propagated by his Genoese namesake two centuries later. It is not

¹⁵ Giustiniani San Lorenzo, *Disciplina e perfezione della vita monastica*, in idem, *Opera omnia*, vol. II, ed. and trans. A. Costantini, A. Cotugno and S. Zoico (Venice: 2008). On Giustiniani, see ibid. v–vi; and Del Torre G., "Lorenzo Giustinian, santo", *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (henceforth, *DBI*) 66 (2006) 73–77.

really surprising that the work of the saintly Venetian should have gained a second life during the Counter-Reformation. In their day, the Celestini had promoted an ideal of poverty and renunciation of the world without drastically attacking the established social order. After the Council of Trent, their devotional model fitted well with efforts to propagate monastic forms of discipline among lay audiences. In 1569 Giolito de' Ferrari published *De disciplina* in Italian; and the early seventeenth century witnessed repeated reprints of Lorenzo's *Opera omnia*. Following his beatification in 1524, it was mainly political obstacles that delayed Lorenzo's canonization until 1690.

Thus it makes sense that Giovanni Battista Giustiniani should have quoted the blessed Lorenzo, the more so since the text affirmed Giustiniani's conclusion that in paradise the body had become spiritualized (243). In fact, Lorenzo made the point in almost identical words: 'And finally, [the substance of the body] is of animal nature as long as it dwells in this life, but after the glory of the resurrection it becomes all spiritual, in such a way that it can penetrate, and pass through, every solid body [...]'. Thus the body 'will abound in pleasures, in many ways, and through all of its senses'. 17

Yet this is where the similarity ended. For the Theatine misread his source in a fundamental way. San Lorenzo's general point in discussing the body and the senses was different: he polemicized against harsh and excessive ascetic practices. While the senses could mislead the spirit and let it slide into the 'lust of the flesh and the love of this world', there was an equal danger in physical abstentions such as frequent fasts and extreme poverty; what counted more were moral virtues like patience, modesty, and a pure heart. Proper devotion rested on 'discipline in managing the body', but it should be conducted in a spirit of prudence and moderation. The body should be seen as an instrument of the soul, not its enemy. Hence the need for a 'federation' ('confederatione') and 'union' ('congiuntione') between flesh and spirit. This alliance was to return in a more perfect form in the afterlife, where the body would be without weakness, illness, deformity, ugliness, and blemish. In this shape all the bodily

 $^{^{16}\,}$ Giustiniani Lorenzo, Trattato della disciplina et della perfettion monastica (Venice, Giovanni Giolito de' Ferrari: 1569); see Del Torre, "Lorenzo Giustinian, santo" for the publication history of his works.

¹⁷ Giustiniani, Trattato della disciplina (1569 edition) 225.

senses, too, were reborn, San Lorenzo said in conclusion, each to praise the Lord in its own way.¹⁸

Missing here, in other words, was the notion of compensation so essential to the later Giustiniani's view of paradise, namely that in heaven the senses made up for what they had rejected during their earthly existence. Instead, Lorenzo Giustiniani is far closer to a conception analyzed long ago by Alberto Tenenti. In a classic work, Tenenti argued that fifteenthcentury ideals of paradise, while rooted in the Thomist tradition, had effectively moved towards epicurean, hedonistic positions. In this respect humanist texts like Lorenzo Valla's De voluptate and Giannozzo Manetti's De dignitate et excellentia hominis were not substantially different from the sermons of the Franciscan Antonio da Bitonto or, half a century later, Celso Maffei's *De sensibilibus deliciis paradisi*, dedicated to Pope Julius II. Maffei, for example, elaborated freely on the rebirth of touch, which in heaven found the greatest joy in embraces and kisses. Tenenti considered this agreement between humanists and churchmen 'of the highest interest', as it signalled a 'deep tendency of the new Italian sensibility'. 19 The implications became clear in the satire of Angelo Beolco's Dialogo facetissimo et ridiculosissimo (1525). The poet better known as Ruzante ironically posited the existence of two paradises: one rather empty and devoid of social life, in which this world's ascetics continued to abstain from all physical joys and contemplate God; the other, in which those who had enjoyed all earthly pleasures, albeit within the bounds of modesty, would still 'eat and drink, and do everything they please'.20

Needless to say, such a view of paradise would not survive the turmoil of the Reformation era. This is not the place to pursue that point. Suffice it to say that permissive humanist speculations about paradise soon met the critical eyes of censors. For example, their attention was attracted by one expression in Baldassarre Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, scrutinized by the Index in the 1570s and 1580s. In the book, Pietro Bembo's ecstatic vision of love culminated in the soul feeling 'together with the pleasure, the fear and reverence that we are wont to have for sacred things, and judg[ing] that it has found its paradise'. The undue association of the sacred and the profane was erased in the expurgated edition (1584), where the lover

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Tenenti A., *Il senso della morte e l'amore della vita* (Turin: 1957) 197. On Maffei, see also Klaus Pietschmann's contribution to the present volume.

²⁰ Ibid. 200. For a detailed analysis of Ruzante's position, see the essay by Laura Giannetti in this volume.

ended up merely 'full of all earthly happiness'.²¹ Similarly, Ruzante's proposal of two paradises in his *Dialogo facetissimo* was cut from cleaned-up editions of 1598 and 1617.²²

In this reaction – in the separation of sacred and profane, of heaven and earth – we may see the immediate background of Giovanni Battista Giustiniani's moral view of the senses in paradise. The dualism that characterized it, I suggest, had become a hallmark of Counter-Reformation ascetic practice. The devotional works of Roberto Bellarmino (one of Giustiniani's sources) are helpful to make this point.

Giustiniani quoted the learned Jesuit's *De aeterna felicitate sanctorum* as he explained the notion of the impassibility of corporeal vision in paradise; this 'gift' was necessary, he argued, for the eyes to survive exposure to the splendours of heaven unscathed. Yet Bellarmino's treatment (and probably his influence on Giustiniani) went well beyond this issue: it was part of a systematic discussion of each of the senses in paradise, quite similar to Giustiniani's. Thus Bellarmino had downplayed the role of smell and limited the return of touch to the 'pure' kind. What is more, he suggested a correspondence (so important to Giustiniani) between the earthly sufferings of the saints and their specific rewards in heaven. Citing Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, he claimed that the martyrs were most blessed in those body parts that had suffered the most during life.²³

Another devotional treatise by Bellarmino allows us to see the context and implications of this argument. The cardinal's influential *De arte bene moriendi* (1620) was premised on the notion that the best preparation for death was a life lived well. Ironically, then, the last rites could become the starting point for a discussion of a proper lifestyle. Central to it should be a 'custody' of the bodily senses that would prevent them from becoming the conduit of sinful influences upon the soul. Thus Bellarmino reflected on the anointing of the senses, one by one, to outline specific strategies to ward off evil in everyday life. In summing up, Bellarmino pointed out the ancient monastic origins of his recommended life – one that was 'utterly

²¹ Boer W. de, "Nobility Contested: Notes on the Expurgation of Castiglione's *Cortegiano*", in Prosperi A. – Schiera P. – Zarri G. (eds.), *Chiesa cattolica e mondo moderno: Scritti in onore di Paolo Prodi* (Bologna: 2007) 65–84, at 75–76. The quoted passage is based on Castiglione B., *The Book of the Courtier. The Singleton Translation*, ed. D. Javitch (New York – London 2002) 254.

 $^{^{22}}$ Zorzi L., "Il Ruzante in censura", *Il Mondo* 5/50 (1953) 7–8; Ruzante, Teatro,ed. L. Zorzi (Turin: 1967) 1447 n. 50.

²³ Bellarmino Roberto, *De aeterna felicitate sanctorum libri quinque*, 2nd ed. (Antwerp, officina Plantiniana: 1668) 195, 222.

opposed to the delights and pleasures of the flesh, in fasting, watches, prostrations on the ground, in scourgings and in hair cloth, not out of hatred for the body, but out of hatred for the wantonness of the flesh'. It will come as no surprise that Bellarmino, later in his book, held up the sensory delights of paradise as the ultimate reward of the faithful. Woe, however, to the hypocrites, like the monk who (in Gregory the Great's exemplum) feigned a life of fasting but ate and drank in secret: there was no question but that his place was in hell. Thus the joys of paradise and the earthly discipline of the senses were the two sides of the same coin.²⁴

Prefigurations of Paradise

Giustiniani's Easter lectures, then, far from being timeless or conceived in a cultural vacuum, fully participated in the ascetic revival of the Counter-Reformation. Further clues may help illuminate the specifics of his agenda. Among other deviations from Henao's blueprint, Giustiniani referred twice to artistic productions and liturgical celebrations to make the unimaginable imaginable for his Neapolitan audience.

First he referred – in truth, rather dismissively – to the famous Medici villa of Pratolino as an approximation of paradise. The place of 'proud pleasures of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany' was, in the words of a saintly monk, merely 'a stable of paradise' (226). In this way the preacher distanced himself from the stereotype of gardens as images of paradise. Raffaele Gualterotti, for instance, had celebrated the Medici gardens in precisely that way: 'Here we see, I believe, a paradise / Abounding in sweetness, merriment, and laughter'. ²⁵ If this might raise concerns about overly worldly interpretations, Francesco de' Vieri meant to counter them

²⁴ Bellarmino Roberto, *De arte bene moriendi libri duo* (Cologne, Cornelius ab Egmond: 1626) 120–141 (quote at 139–140), 160–166 (on the punishments of hell), 166–174 (on the joys of paradise), and 239 (on the hypocritical monk); the English quote is from Bellarmine Robert, *Spiritual Writings*, trans. J.P. Donnelly – R.J. Teske (New York: 1989) 231–386 (quote at 313; other references at 330–338 and 374). Elsewhere I intend to come back to the diffusion of sense discipline as an early modern ideal.

²⁵ 'Si vede, io per me, credo un Paradiso / Tal v'è sempre dolcezza, e festa, e riso'.

The poem, edited in Battisti E., *L'antirinascimento*, 2 vols. (Milan: 1989), vol. I, 481, is cited in Brunon H., *Pratolino: Art des jardins et imaginaire de la nature dans l'Italie de la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle,* Thèse de doctorat (Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne: 2008) 238. On images of the garden, see Raedts P., "Het aards paradijs: De tuin als beeld van het geluk", in Stuip R.E.V. – Vellekoop C. (eds.), *Tuinen in de Middeleeuwen* (Hilversum: 1992) 35–50.

in his philosophical meditations on Pratolino. His view, premised on the terminological triad 'Pratolino, paradise, and garden', was deeply moralizing. Hence the following description:

Past this cage there is a garden, designed with the most beautiful sections. It has a fountain in front, with two porphyry columns supporting a roof with a cupola. In other words, above this world, which contains people with and without virtue, as well as the vicious, we find the empyreal heaven. The latter is subdivided into elegant orders of angelic spirits and blessed souls: here is the source of all virtue, grace, and other goods. The two columns around this fount are divine justice, which punishes the wicked, and divine love, which rewards the just $[\ldots]$. 26

Such metaphorical readings led to an 'exhortation to the young to live well and virtuously, and to devote themselves to some profession'. The garden – this symbol of privilege and leisure – thus occasioned a critique of *otium*, a call to mind 'the purpose for which the king of the universe has sent us down here' and like peasants and plebeians learn a useful craft. As models of sanctity, however, De' Vieri preferred distinctly unplebeian figures like Pius V, the archbishops Carlo Borromeo and Antonio Altoviti, and Caterina de' Ricci.²⁷ The author did not mention that, among some of the latter, a critique had emerged of the very kind of aristocratic villa whose praises he sang – and here Giustiniani seems to have found his inspiration. Whoever was the saint who had disparaged Pratolino, Borromeo had famously scorned the villas of Caprarola and Bagnaia.²⁸ This rejection had ushered in a new type of garden – the hermitage – that ideally combined the joys of the senses with ascetic practice.²⁹

²⁶ De' Vieri Francesco, *Discorsi* [...] *delle maravigliose opere di Pratolino et d'Amore* (Florence, Giorgio Marescotti: 1587) 11ff. and 50.

²⁷ Ibid. 83 and 88.

²⁸ Marcora C. (ed.), "Il processo diocesano informativo sulla vita di S. Carlo per la sua canonizzazione", *Memorie storiche della diocesi di Milano* 9 (1962) 76–730, at 125–126.

²⁹ See, among recent studies, Matteucci Armandi A.M., "Quanto resta delle grotte in Emilia: La sala musiva del Cardinale Filippo Guastavillani", in Lapi Ballerini I. – Medri L.M., *Artifici d'acque e giardini: La cultura delle grotte e dei ninfei in Italia e in Europa* (Florence: 1999) 360–368; Barry F., "'Pray to Thy Father Which Is in Secret': The Tradition of Coretti, Romitorii and Lanfranco's Hermit Cycle at the Palazzo Farnese", in Imorde J. – Neumeyer F. – Weddigen T. (eds.), *Barocke Inszenierung* (Emsdetten: 1999) 190–221; Lillie A., "Fiesole: Locus amoenus or Penitential Landscape?", *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance* 11 (2007) 11–55; Witte A.A., *The Artful Hermitage: The Palazzetto Farnese as a Counter-Reformation Diaeta* (Rome: 2008); Aksamija N., "Defining the Counter-Reformation Villa: Landscape and Sacredness in Late Renaissance Villeggiatura'", in Ceccarelli F. – Venturi G. (eds.), *Delizie in villa: Il giardino rinascimentale e i suoi committenti* (Florence: 2008) 33–63; and Brunon H., "Du jardin comme paysage sacral en Italie à la Renaissance", in Weemans M. – Ribouillault D.

But Giustiniani looked for worthier and more efficacious prefigurations of paradise. He found one closer to home. That year, he noted in his second lecture on the senses, Naples had celebrated Gaetano Thiene in spectacular festivities. Gaetano Thiene (1480–1547) was a co-founder of Giustiniani's own Theatine order; in Naples he was particularly revered for his decades of work in that city. The recent commemoration provided ample evidence of this attachment. In the preacher's words, it 'represent[ed] the live image of the glory of paradise', leading 'the immortals [to] rejoice that, in honour of the Blessed Gaetano, this people has shown on earth an image (simulacro) of their glory' (235). The reference is particularly interesting. From the time of Gaetano's beatification (1629), the Neapolitan Theatines had aggressively promoted his cult to advance the cause of his canonization, which in fact took place in 1671. They redoubled their efforts, in a climate of strenuous competition with other regular orders, around mid-century. They did so, in part, by playing into a remarkable spike in devotional fervour for Gaetano's thaumaturgic powers.³⁰ Publication projects enhanced the effort. In 1649, a printer close to the Theatines, Secondino Roncagliolo, published a brief, anonymous Sommario della vita del B. Gaetano Tiene; six years later, he followed up with Giacomo Dentice's much longer hagiography.³¹ Another form of publicity derived from Gaetano's annual feast on 7 August, which in the 1650s came to be celebrated with particular splendour. 1654 was especially significant: that year Pope Innocent X ordered the Neapolitan curia to finalize the canonical proceedings necessary to complete the canonization. This factor no doubt added lustre to the blessed's feast, 32 None other than Giustiniani, who had

⁽eds.), Sacred Landscape: Landscape as Exegesis in Early Modern Europe / Le paysage sacré: Le paysage comme exégèse dans l'Europe de la première modernité (Florence: 2011) 283–316.

³⁰ Sallmann J.-M., *Naples et ses saints à l'âge baroque* (1540–1750) (Paris: 1994) 345–346. The competitive climate is noted throughout by Sallmann, as well as De Maio, *Società e vita religiosa* 109–110, 144–146; Galasso G., *Napoli spagnola dopo Masaniello*, 2nd ed. (Rome: 2005) 60, 429–430, 433; and Marino J.A., *Becoming Neapolitan: Citizen Culture in Baroque Naples* (Baltimore: 2011) 134.

³¹ Sommario della vita del B. Gaetano Tiene fondatore della S. Religione de Chierici Regolari (Naples, Secondino Roncagliolo: 1649); Giacomo Dentice, Vita e miracoli del Glorioso B. Gaetano Thiene fundatore della religione de' Padri Cherici Regolari (Naples, Secondino Roncagliolo: 1655). For additional hagiographical texts of this period, see Chiminelli P., San Gaetano Thiene: Cuore della Riforma Cattolica (Vicenza – Rome: 1948) 1017–1019.

³² Chiminelli, San Gaetano Thiene 973 (on the canonization process). The significance of Gaetano's feast in these years is emphasized in Andrea Rubino's chronicle of Neapolitan festivities (Notitia di quanto è occorso in Napoli dall'anno 1648 al 1669, 4 vols., Biblioteca della Società Napoletana di Storia Patria, MS XXIII D 14–17), as noted by Mauro I., "Crónica festiva de la Nápoles virreinal: La Notitia de Andrea Rubino (1648–1669)", Cuadernos de

perhaps been called to Naples to support the canonization efforts, wrote an extensive account of the Blessed Gaetano's 'triumph'. 33 In three talks, he took his readers around the city, describing in loving detail the festive apparatus, architectural constructions, mechanical devices (machine), theatrical representations, musical performances, and the lighting and decorations he had noticed all over town. The terminology suggests a precise parallelism with the wonders of the empyrean Giustiniani described in the near-contemporary Lo stato de corpi beati.34 This was no coincidence. On the occasion of Gaetano's feast, Giustiniani suggested, Naples represented paradise itself as it sought to honour a saint who from his heavenly perch watched over the urban community he patronized. The city, therefore, was a 'small heaven' ('piccolo cielo') offering itself up for contemplation. Like the pages of a book, its streets, squares, and churches called for a close reading. And as Giustiniani proceeded, he described the devices and performances he encountered in the same terms of sensual delight – prompted by candles and torches, joyful conversations, music, smells of roses and other flowers – he had emphasized in his Easter lectures on the senses in paradise. Imagination, representation, and (very likely) experience worked in a mutually reinforcing fashion.³⁵

For all its abundance, however, this feast appears to have been restrained in one important way: Giustiniani described only phenomena that appealed to vision, hearing, and smell. Soon we will return to the significance of this choice. Here, as we complete our discussion of the

Historia Moderna 34 (2009) 67–93, at 90–91. Salvatore Castaldo published an account of the 1654 feast: Relatione delle famosissime luminarie fatte nella città di Napoli nella festa del gran patriarca miracoloso Gaetano Thiene (Naples, heredi di Roncagliolo per Castaldo: 1654). Elsewhere I intend to return to these descriptions; what follows is based solely on Giustiniani's account.

³³ Giustiniani Giovanni Battista, *Il B. Gaetano trionfante nella città di Napoli, cioè tre discorsi historici et erudite* [...] (Naples, Camillo Cavallo: 1654). See also De Maio R., "Come si crea un mito agiografico: S. Gaetano Patrono di Napoli", in idem, *Riforme e miti nella Chiesa del Cinquecento* (Naples: 1973) 279–287. That Giustiniani's arrival in Naples was recent is suggested by the general survey of the Theatine order commissioned by Innocent X (1650): his name appears as member of the Genoese convent of S. Siro and the Venetian house of S. Niccolò di Tolentino (but not of any of the Neapolitan houses): Campanelli M., *I teatini: L'inchiesta di Innocenzo X sui Regolari in Italia*, ed. G. Galasso, vol. I (Rome: 1987) 374, 383.

The chronological connection between these works is close: the reference to Gaetano's feast in *Lo stato de' corpi beati* 235 indicates that Giustiniani completed the work after 7 August 1654 (he signed the dedication on 20 August); *Il B. Gaetano trionfante*, written after the same feast, obtained Roman approval on 26 September of the same year; the latter work (ibid. 76, 103) refers to each of the two lectures on the senses in *Lo stato*.

³⁵ Giustiniani, Il B. Gaetano trionfante 2 and 6.

author's *modus operandi*, it is worth noting that this approach was also informed by a cosmological simile. Giustiniani had decided:

to proceed like an astrologer, who first contemplates the images and figures of the firmament, forty-eight in number, each of which contains a poetic invention (*finzione poetica*), and then goes on to describe the marvels with which the Creator enriched his big creation. Thus I will first contemplate the devices (*machine*) of the Neapolitan heaven, which are more than a hundred, each of which points to some virtue of our blessed; another evening I will lovingly observe up-close the qualities, honours, and wonders of this new heaven.

Not surprisingly, these *machine* were often cosmological devices – representations of the sun, moon, and stars, or of paradise itself – serving as the setting of images of Gaetano, the Madonna and Child, and other saints. Observers (thus Giustiniani extended the simile) would benefit from an enhanced sharpness of vision just as 'modern astrologers have developed many instruments by means of which they have detected some [stars] that were unknown to the ancients'.³⁶

Clearly, this contemplation of the heavens was poetic — elsewhere Giustiniani calls it 'metaphorical' — rather than astronomical, but in his view these forms of observation were not distinct or contradictory. Unity characterized his way of looking at the world and the cosmos. Gaetano's feast showed that heaven ties great things, 'not only natural but also mystical and moral ones, [...] to certain opportune times'. Therefore the subtext was also moral. Setting itself apart from other cities, such as Paris and Antwerp, the Neapolitan citizenry had come together to celebrate a saint who epitomized the disdain for all worldly things; and it had done so in such perfect harmony, social order, and moral uprightness as to prefigure paradise.³⁷

Gaetano's Triumph

This picture is obviously too good to be true. How could Naples – this proverbial 'paradise inhabited by devils' – have turned into an emblem of virtue?³⁸ Or to pose the question historically, what was the historical real-

³⁶ Giustiniani, Il B. Gaetano trionfante 7 and 70.

³⁷ Quotes at Giustiniani, *Il B. Gaetano trionfante* 45, 111; see further 39 and 99–103.

³⁸ The famous expression, already a stereotype in the seventeenth century, is discussed in Croce B., "Paradiso abitato da diavoli", in idem, *Uomini e cose della vecchia Italia*, 2 vols. (Bari: 1927), vol. I, 70.

ity beneath the sheen of this account of the Gaetano celebrations? What motivated it? What, finally, can this tell us about Giustiniani's sensual paradise? A hagiographical digression in the *Gaetano trionfante* suggests that the answers were political in nature.

The passage seeks to explain to imaginary foreigners what the Neapolitans owed to Gaetano. During his life, the saint had protected the city from the heresies of Pietro Martire Vermigli and Bernardino Ochino. In addition, he had died praying for his beloved Neapolitans, whose piety and virtue he admired, during the troubles of 1547. Thanks to this sacrifice peace and tranquillity had soon returned. The reference (which Giustiniani did not clarify further) was to the civic resistance against Emperor Charles V's attempt to introduce the Inquisition in Naples. The event would later become a trope to justify Gaetano's status as co-patron of Naples.³⁹ Giustiniani added another one in the same mould. Exactly a century later, in 1647, 'due to some malignant star, this fatal turbulence along with a new massacre came back to molest this blooming city' and 'almost destroyed it completely'. But Naples had recovered against all odds, a fact many pious citizens attributed again to Gaetano's favour. Hence the city's 'singular demonstrations to testify to earth and heaven, to mortals and immortals about the eternal obligations it professes to its great protector [...]'.40

This last reference was obviously to Masaniello's Revolt (1647), the popular uprising triggered by a much-hated tax on fruit. The ten-day rebellion brought deep discontent over economic depression and Spanish misrule into the open; it dramatically challenged the city's social order before giving way to a short-lived republic, suppressed by Spanish troops on 7 April 1648. Giustiniani's strong condemnation of the rebellion was in line with the Theatines' response to the crisis. As the religious orders sought to address the deep fissures in Neapolitan society, some (such as the Franciscans) had taken the side of the popular faction. Yet the Theatines, heavily aristocratic in membership and orientation, remained loyal to the Spanish regime.⁴¹ The promotion of Gaetano's cult – starting with

³⁹ On the 1547 events, see the summary in Fonseca G., "Napoli", in Prosperi A. (ed.), *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, 4 vols. (Pisa: 2010), vol. II, 1096–1099. On the parallelism with the 1647 revolt, see Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan* 6–7; in connection to Gaetano, De Maio, "Gaetano patrono di Napoli" 284–285; Greco G., "Gaetano Thiene, santo", *DBI* 51 (1998) 203–207, at 206; and, in hagiographic mode, Chiminelli, *San Gaetano Thiene*, 829–847.

⁴⁰ Giustiniani, *Il B. Gaetano trionfante* 33–35.

⁴¹ Galasso, *Napoli spagnola* 426; De Maio, *Società e vita religiosa* 110–111 emphasizes the Theatines' aristocratic bent. Selwyn J.D., *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Aldershot: 2004) 199–200 highlights the mixed results of the 'social drama of [Jesuit] peacemaking'.

the attribution to him of the end of the crisis – has to be seen in this perspective. Evident in the preacher's description of the celebrations is both a political view that affirmed existing hierarchies and a conviction that social enmity could be transcended by a common religious cause. Gaetano's feast, then, was indeed a 'triumph', as it celebrated the restoration of civic and moral order. It brought 'joy for all the people' ('gaudium omni populo', a reference to *Luke* 2:10) by uniting 'great and small, rich and poor, princes and vassals, men and women, nobles and *popolani*, lay and religious persons'. It was this reconciliation that the frail nobleman-priest felt moved to join in person. In a memorable autobiographical moment, he described it this way:

despite my seventy-seven years, and even though it was night, I could not bear being locked up in a carriage, and walked these streets with my little walking stick, nimble and light-footed, because with my spirits expanded for joy and my blood revived, the outing did not tire me; instead, I felt as though the general exultation took me by the arm – $gaudium\ omni\ populo.^{42}$

Yet this exalted vision had implications that were especially poignant for one social category – the poor – on whom the aristocratic Theatines had focussed their ministry since Gaetano's time, but who also constituted the ranks from which Masaniello had largely drawn his supporters. In the working-class Armieri neighbourhood, Giustiniani wrote in one of his examples, devotion emerged victorious from its battle with poverty. There, the 'rich poverty' of one *fondaco* had produced an altar 'adorned with a garland of lights' worthy of being 'moved among the signs that sparkle in the firmament'. Such 'solemn triumphs', the preacher concluded, made it apparent 'that the poor had forgotten their poverty, and the afflicted had banished their afflictions'. The moral was obvious. Rather than seeking fulfilment of their desires here-and-now, the materially deprived did well to cherish the prospect of a paradise of the senses post-mortem. The celebrations foreshadowed the rewards of delayed gratification.

This interpretation of Gaetano's 'triumph' gains in depth when we compare it to the feast of San Giovanni Battista celebrated in June 1649. That event, too, came in response to the suppression of Masaniello's Revolt. It was orchestrated by the newly installed Neapolitan viceroy, the count of

⁴² Giustiniani, Il B. Gaetano trionfante 99–100.

⁴³ Giustiniani, *Il B. Gaetano trionfante* 99 and, for the remark on the Arcieri *fondaco*, 56. Musi A., *La rivolta di Masaniello nella scena politica barocca* (Naples: 1989) 112 lists Arcieri among the artisan and working-class neighbourhoods from which the early rebels probably hailed.

Oñate, who thus inaugurated a spectacular season of political ceremony and theatre. The abundant apparatus, while drawing on a long tradition of political appropriation of this popular festival, clearly demonstrated the ruler's intent to reaffirm Spanish sovereignty over Naples. Most noteworthy for our purposes, its symbolism appealed very differently to the senses than the feast of Gaetano five years later. Thus it featured a kind of Cockaigne display consisting of a mountain 'on whose top one saw a large pot filled with boiling macaroni, which dripped down [the slopes of] the mount between trees full of torroni, provale [sic], hams and cheeses, alongside fountains of wine, pastry ovens, and as inhabitants [the display featured] hunchbacks dancing the *matacino*'. Another *macchina* along the parade route was at least as eloquent. Visually and musically, it represented 'hell, in which Tantalus appeared [...] tormented by hunger and thirst'. Yet 'as His Eminence passed by, [this device] was transformed and became a paradise in which Parthenope sang many praises to His Eminence'.44 Dedicated to the sense of taste, the spectacle offered up a worldly paradise as a ritual assurance to a hungry populace. The contrast with the Gaetano celebrations could hardly be greater. Giustiniani may have supported the Spanish regime, but he also wished to promote, along with the cult of his order's founder, a more ascetic pursuit of sensory satisfaction. He preferred the pleasures of sight, sound, and smell – the ones he privileged in his Easter sermons on paradise.⁴⁵ More generally, the Theatine feast probably fitted into mounting clerical efforts, especially

⁴⁴ Thus a 1649 Relazione of the event cited by Mancini F., "L'immaginario di regime': Apparati e scenografie alla corte del viceré", in Civiltà del Seicento a Napoli, 2 vols. (Naples: 1984), vol. I, 27–35, at 31–32; torrone is a sweet based on almonds and honey; provola, a fresh cheese from bufala milk; the mattaccino is a ritual dance akin to the moresca that could take on grotesque features (see Sutton J. et al., "Matachins", in The International Encyclopedia of Dance [Oxford: 1998]). On Neapolitan Cuccagna displays and carts (and more generally apparatuses for religious feasts), see Mancini F., Feste ed apparati civili e religiosi in Napoli dal Viceregno alla Capitale (Naples: 1968) 85–123 (esp. 90–94) and Barletta L., "Un esempio di festa: il Carnevale", in Capolavori in festa: Effimero barocco a Largo di Palazzo (1683–1759) (Naples: 1997) 91–104 (esp. 100–102).

⁴⁵ Perhaps Giustiniani's ascetic emphasis is also to be understood as a reaction to concerns about moral and materialist 'decadence' within his own order hinted at in De Maio, *Società e vita religiosa* 5–6, 111, 153. While the feasts of Gaetano have not been adequately studied, it is clear that they impressed not just the Theatines: the 1654 celebrations (and those of 1656) may have boosted the development of *luminaria* in Neapolitan festive apparatuses, said to have been first introduced citywide during the feast of San Gennaro in 1660; see Franzese R., "Macchine e apparati luminosi per la festa di San Gennaro", in Pane R. (ed.), *Seicento Napoletano: Arte, costume e ambiente* (Milan: 1984) 498–514, esp. 503.

post-Masaniello, to rein in the sensory abundance of established religious festivals.⁴⁶ Sensory stimulation was thus a high-level political matter.

Apocalyptic Forebodings

The Theatine efforts succeeded in at least one way. In the summer of 1656, when Naples was struck by a devastating plague, Gaetano's moment had come. The desperate Neapolitans honoured his feast in a nine-day ritual (or *novena*) that appears to have followed the stylistic parameters of previous celebrations. At the lazaretto it culminated in 'fireworks, lights, and a splendid apparatus around the altar of the blessed, where Mass was celebrated, amidst music and a great confluence' of people.⁴⁷ Soon the extravaganza was seen as critical in turning the tide of the pestilence. Gaetano's miraculous intercession led the city to request for him the status of co-patron, and to intensify the celebrations in his honour during subsequent years. The plague constituted a milestone on the way to his canonization in 1671.⁴⁸

A glance forward to that year offers one more way to illuminate the moment central in this chapter: it may help us better to understand the charged atmosphere in which Giustiniani offered Neapolitans his vision of paradise in 1654. The canonization inspired the Theatine Girolamo Vitale to publish a booklet entitled, *St. Gaetano Thiene's Voyage to Heaven.*⁴⁹ Vitale organized it into nine chapters, each devoted to one of the saint's virtues, to serve in the *novena* accompanying his feast. It was to recall the saint's own 'happy but tiresome voyage' as he 'travelled from this earth to

⁴⁶ Compare, specifically on the evolution of the feast of S. Giovanni Battista, Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan* 220–221 (and see his remark on the senses, 227).

⁴⁷ "Attestato degl'Officiali del Lazzaretto" (November 1656), in De Renzi S., *Napoli nell'anno 1656; ovvero, documenti della pestilenza che desolò Napoli* (Naples: 1867) 249–250. For a similar account, see the "Attestato del Governatore del Lazzaretto di Loreto" (29 November 1656), ibid. 246–247. These statements were part of the documentation gathered to support Gaetano's elevation to patron of the city.

⁴⁸ The *supplica* to Pope Alexander VII, of 19 June 1657, is reproduced in De Renzi, *Napoli nell'anno* 1656 240–245. See also Mancini E., *S. Gaetano Thiene e la peste del* 1656 (Naples: 1956); and, for artistic evidence and responses, Porzio A., "Immagini della peste del 1656", in *Civiltà del Seicento*, vol. II, 51–57; and Clifton J., "Mattia Preti's Frescoes for the City Gates of Naples", *The Art Bulletin* 76 (1994) 479–501.

⁴⁹ Vitale Girolamo, Viaggio al cielo di S. Gaetano Thiene istitutore e primo padre de' Cherici Regolari, spiegato in nove considerationi encomiastiche, e morali, sopra la di lui vita, e principali virtù, in ordine all'essercitio della Novena [...] Con l'aggiunta di due lettere del Santo e nove miracoli prodotti nella Sac. Congr. de' Riti in ordine alla di lui canonizatione (Rome, Ignatio de' Lazari: 1671).

the empyrean'. The first chapter was dedicated to Gaetano's 'detachment from earthly things'. The saint's excellence in this key virtue matched the vast distance between 'this vale of tears' and heaven. The simile suggested a further cosmological metaphor: one might 'establish the number of the celestial spheres so as to capture the beautiful concert of those rare virtues through which Gaetano advanced to take possession of that eternal home'. Vitale was reluctant to venture into this difficult area, but offered his opinion anyway:

while this [issue] is disputed among the most renowned astronomers of our century up to this day, I believe – following Tycho [Brahe] and agreeing with my most learned [Paolo] Aresi – that heaven is one, that is to say a most simple and subtle substance, which from the external surface of the earth reaches up to the concave of the empyreal heaven.⁵⁰

This invalidated the common distinction between 'air' and 'ether', except for an increasing thinness as one approached the empyrean; nor were there multiple heavens. What remained were heaven's enormous altitude and distance from earth.

Thus Vitale's universe, like Giustiniani's, was a moral one, and a fitting frame for the new saint's veneration. Yet it also displayed some remarkable discrepancies from the worldview of his deceased order brother. Vitale, reaching back to Aresi's views, embraced the early-modern cosmological innovations with evident open-mindedness, leading him to posit the homogeneity and vastness, if not infinity, of the universe – both assumptions that had gained strength from the heliocentric theory.⁵¹ In contrast, Giustiniani's cautious traditionalism went hand in hand with suggestions of proximity between heaven and earth lacking in Vitale's exalted portrait of San Gaetano. Thus, for all its fundamental dichotomies, Giustiniani's cosmology left room for considerable ambiguity. As we have seen, his paradise required a certain bodily restraint and had the horrors of hell within reach of the senses; his earth, while wicked, also allowed extraordinary anticipations of the joys of heaven in art and ritual. Giustiniani's description of Gaetano's feast, moreover, had an unmistakably apocalyptic tenor. Thus he noted:

I know well that there is nothing on earth that may be compared to the beauties of heaven. Over the past evenings, though, it appeared to me that I somehow saw metaphorically fulfilled what God said in the Apocalypse,

⁵⁰ This and preceding quotes are in Vitale, *Viaggio* 3, 11, 14.

⁵¹ Funkenstein A., *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: 1986) 68–70.

'Ecce ego creo caelum novum et terram novam' ['For I am about to create a new heaven and a new earth'; actually, *Is.* 65:17, cf. *Rev.* 21:1] because it appeared as though this most prominent city in the world had been changed into the firmament where the stars are, and the stars themselves, tired of their ancient abode, had come to inhabit the earth.

Giustiniani allowed that all this rested on an illusion, or at least depended on artefacts 'that the industry of human devotion, seeking to equal God's omnipotent hand, was able to make on earth, in competition with those [marvellous things] we see camping out in heaven'.⁵² Yet the preacher's notion of a 'new heaven' raises further, potentially problematic, questions. Exactly how did the earthly and heavenly paradises relate to each other? How far off was the final reckoning? How near was the ultimate reward?

These questions had, in fact, concerned Giustiniani from the start of his Easter lecture cycle. Henao had not discussed them, and so the preacher had turned to a number of other neo-scholastic authorities. The answers he came up with were multiple and confusing. On the one hand, as a learned scholar he produced a wealth of examples to criticize the many predictions that history had proved erroneous; hence he was sceptical of the human forecasting ability. On the other hand, solicited by his anxious audience, he repeatedly suggested that the world was old, infirm, and moribund (33). Among the signs portending its end, he considered Jesus's indication that there had to be 'wars, plagues, famines, earthquakes, persecutions, calamities, and a disproportionate increase of iniquity' (29; cf. Matt. 24: 6ff.). Of such disasters there had been all too many in recent times -Giustiniani mentioned the last eruption of Vesuvius, while ignoring the Masaniello revolt – but in his view they were all too general and common to be significant.⁵³ He took much more seriously another criterion – the completion of the christianization of the world. Had not Christ prophesied that 'this gospel will be proclaimed throughout the world, and then the end will come'? (22-23; cf. Matt. 24:14). Hence the preacher elaborated on the many regions that, in the distant past and more recently, had been evangelized, and on those – in the Americas, Japan and China, particularly – where he deemed the process still unfinished. This theme allowed the preacher once more to bring the universal project of salva-

⁵² This and previous quotes are from Giustiniani, *Il B. Gaetano trionfante* 43–44.

⁵³ His downplaying of both events was quite possibly motivated by the political connotations they had assumed in popular reception. See Cocco S., "Contesting Vesuvius and Claiming Naples: Disaster in Print and Pen, 1631–1649", in Halvorson M.J. – Spierling K.E. (eds.), *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: 2008) 307–326.

tion closer to home: for among the religious orders he listed as engaged in it were also the Jesuits and his own Theatines, both strongly present in Naples (41–45).

Except for these particulars, Giustiniani was by no means original here. The connection between the end times and Christian missionizing of the world, whose origins were medieval, had gained new momentum with the great explorations of the sixteenth century. However, in efforts to curb apocalyptic movements, Catholic authorities had condemned precise eschatological dating: hence, for example, the conviction by the Inquisition of Lima of the prophetic friar Francisco de la Cruz (1578). The Jesuit missionary José de Acosta, who had served the Peruvian Inquisition as a consultant, went on to write an eschatological tract *De temporibus novissimis* (1590) that made many of the same points Giustiniani was to repeat half a century later. By that time, Acosta's work was one in a string of works that had defined the current Catholic orthodoxy in this matter. These included biblical commentaries by the Dominican Tomás Malvenda and the Jesuit Cornelius a Lapide (Cornelis van der Steen) on which Giustiniani was to draw as his principal sources on the subject. Se

Giustiniani also relied on these works for his conclusion. Ultimately, time was immaterial in any apocalyptic scenario. What really counted, Giustiniani told his audience, was that the God-fearing hold 'the end of all things [...] before their eyes and [see] God's judgment on their doorstep' (33). The point was not to go down the dubious path of anticipating the collective doomsday but to prepare for the certainty of individual death. This imperative — so obviously urgent to the septuagenarian preacher himself — applied equally to all mortals: '[L]et us prepare ourselves in such a way that the time of resurrection will be a happy one, and this body will be returned to us full of glory' (34). The way to do this was to 'keep it pure and clear of sin' (34). Thus Giustiniani's paradise of the senses was imbued

⁵⁴ On the concept's medieval antecedents, see Whalen B.E., *Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: 2009).

⁵⁵ On Acosta, and generally on the connections between apocalyptic movements and New World exploration, see the important essay by Prosperi A., "America e Apocalisse: Note sulla 'conquista spirituale' del Nuovo Mondo", *Critica storica* 13 (1976) 1–67; also in idem, *America e Apocalisse e altri saggi* (Pisa: 1999) 15–63.

⁵⁶ Malvenda Tomás, *De Antichristo libri XI* (Rome, Carolus Vulliettus: 1604); Lapide Cornelius a, *Commentaria in Acta Apostolorum, Epistolas canonicas, et Apocalypsin* (Antwerp, Martinus Nutius: 1627). The moral-ascetic tenor of the latter's work, including deep admiration for Borromeo's holy example, has been emphasized by Osculati R., *"Hic Romae*: Cornelio a Lapide commentatore dell'*Apocalisse* al Collegio Romano", in Rusconi R. (ed.), *Storia e figure dell'Apocalisse fra '500 e '600* (Rome: 1996) 315–330.

with a moral-prophetic charge. The promise of bodily resurrection, whenever it might occur, called for discipline of the body now.

A Confessional Paradise

Undoubtedly, then, Giovanni Battista Giustiniani's apocalyptic vision of paradise, conjured up against the backdrop of the dramatic Neapolitan crisis, closely echoed contemporary trends in Catholic spirituality. But it would be a mistake to assume that it resulted only from a deliberate appropriation of ideas within that tradition. The Apocalypse, after all, which 'in the Seicento was preeminent among all biblical books', had become a fertile staging ground for confessional controversy.⁵⁷ Not surprisingly, when Giustiniani discussed the eschatological timetable in his opening lectures, he had insisted on the significance of both Mohammed's and Luther's entry into history. In his book on Gaetano, moreover, the anti-heretical struggle was a central theme. And as far as the senses were concerned, Giustiniani's repeated references to the abominable sensuality of the Muslim paradise confirm that his understanding of the Christian afterlife came about in the crucible of religious polemic and competition. His paradise was confessionalized vis-à-vis Muslim infidels as much as Protestant heretics. The seventeenth century had seen mounting ecclesiastical efforts, particularly since Rome had established the congregation De Propaganda Fide (1622), at anti-Muslim propaganda and Christian conversion efforts. In Naples, this was no abstract issue, as this major port was home to a sizeable population of Muslim slaves. The regular orders partook in concerted attempts to convert them, no doubt using the prospect of a truer, Christian paradise as a major lure.⁵⁸ Yet the quest for slaves also went the other way: corsairs raiding the Italian shores took off with numerous Christian captives. Giustiniani was well aware of this battle, and placed his hero Gaetano right in the midst of it. Next to great capitals and empires where the blessed's fame had spread, the preacher noted with particular pride the veneration of this 'saint of miracles' by Christian

⁵⁷ Armogathe J.-R., "Dall'escatologia alla storia: l'esegesi cattolica dell'Apocalisse nel Seicento", in Rusconi (ed.), *Storia e figure dell'Apocalisse* 301–313 (quote at 301).

⁵⁸ Remiro Andollu Z., "La Sagrada Congregación frente al Islám: Apostolado de la Prensa en lengua árabe", in Metzler J. (ed.), *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum*, vol. 1/1, 1622–1700 (Rome – Freiburg – Vienna: 1971) 707–731; Mazur P.A., "Combating 'Mohammedan Indecency': The Baptism of Muslim Slaves in Spanish Naples, 1563–1667", *Journal of Early Modern History* 13 (2009) 25–48.

slaves in Tunis. Their devotion was so contagious that it led the Turks to emulate them 'in their own way' and 'with a certain moral piety' ('con una certa pietà morale'). This Giustiniani imagined based on his own observations in Naples – 'because I have seen Turkish slaves offer torches and alms in the chapel of the blessed; and when asked for the reason of their devotion, they answered with a pious barbarism that they knew what they knew'. 59

In this environment, Giustiniani was surely aware of potential comparisons between the Catholic and Muslim paradises: this partly explains his restraint in describing the physical pleasures of the afterlife. However, such a defensive posture was likely inadequate to protect this same type of eschatology from attack. In France Giustiniani's main source, Henao's Empyreologia, was soon caught up in a fierce Jansenist polemic against Jesuit morality. The well-known compilation La morale pratique des Jésuites listed it among other Jesuit sources to demonstrate the order's laxist views on paradise and purgatory, likening even their notion of the latter to the Muslim paradise. ⁶⁰ This critique, in turn, caught the attention of the Huguenot Pierre Bayle, who, in his Dictionaire historique et critique, cited it in his own attack on Henao's 'curious account of paradise'. ⁶¹ Bayle was no doubt a crucial link with a much later anti-Catholic polemical tradition – including Isaac Disraeli's periodical writings and Charles Dickens's magazine *All the Year Round* – that chose this sensual paradise as a privileged object of sarcasm and ridicule.⁶² Thus an early modern controversy reverberated through the ages, and helped solidify complex ideas, representations, and ways of experiencing the world into cultural stereotypes.

⁵⁹ Giustiniani, Gaetano trionfante 110–111. On the way the slave trade affected Italy, see Davis R.C., Christian Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800 (Basingstoke – New York: 2003) esp. 139–174. Giustiniani's reference to Tunis possibly responded to recent reports about the treatment of Christian slaves there: see Di S. Lorenzo Francesco, Breve relatione, del calamitoso stato, crudeltà, e bestiali attioni, con le quali son trattati da' barbari li cristiani fatti schiavi, e tutto quello, ch'è passato nel viaggio della redentione de' fedeli di Christo nella città di Tunisi l'anno 1653 (Rome, il Moneta: 1654); cited in Davis, Christian Slavery xxiii.

⁶⁰ La morale pratique des Jésuites représentée en plusieurs histoires arrivées dans toutes les parties du monde (Cologne, Gervinus Quentel: 1669) 271–275, esp. 273. On this publication (issued under a false imprint), in whose compilation the Jansenist Sébastien Joseph du Cambout de Pontchâteau played a major role, see Neveu B., Sébastien Joseph du Cambout de Pontchâteau (1634–1690) et ses missions à Rome (Rome: 1968) 39 and passim.

⁶¹ Bayle Pierre, "Loyola, Ignace de", *Dictionaire historique et critique*, 5th ed. (Amsterdam etc., P. Brunel et al.: 1740), tom. III, 138–149, at 146–147 n. V.

⁶² D'Israeli Isaac, *Curiosities of Literature*, vol. I (London: s.a.) 368; *All the Year Round*, Third series, vol. II (London: 1889) 180.

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THE TEMPTATION OF THE SENSES AT THE SACRO MONTE DI VARALLO

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During his sojourn in northern Italy in the summer or autumn of 1604, the painter and art critic Federico Zuccaro (1542–1609) travelled to the Sacri Monti at Varallo, Crea, and – possibly – Orta. The journey was suggested by none other than Cardinal Federico Borromeo (1564–1631), archbishop of Milan and Zuccaro's long-standing patron and friend. Borromeo had met the much older artist during his cardinalate in Rome (1586–1595) and he had also served as the first Cardinal Protector of the *Accademia di San Luca*, founded by Zuccaro in November of 1593 and presided over by him as *principe*. When Borromeo left for Milan in 1595, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597), equally as well known for his expertise in the sacred and profane arts, succeeded him in that function. Zuccaro's *Academy*

¹ On Federico Zuccaro and the Accademia di San Luca: Weddigen T. (ed.), Federico Zuccaro: Kunst zwischen Ideal und Reform, Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana 27 (Basel: 2000); Prinz W., "Gli statuti dell'Accademia dell'Arte del Disegno e dell'Accademia di S. Luca a Roma", in Winner M. (ed.), Der Maler Federico Zuccari: Ein römischer Virtuoso von europäischem Ruhm, Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana 32 (1997–1998) Beiheft (Munich: 1999) 295-300; Röttgen S., "Der Maler als Principe: Realität, Hintergrund und Wirkung von Zuccaris akademischem Programm", in Winner (ed.), Der Maler Federico Zuccari 301-315. On Federico Borromeo: Jones P.M., Federico Borromeo and the Ambrosiana: Art Patronage and Reform in Seventeenth-Century Milan (Cambridge: 1993); Boer W. de, The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan (Leiden: 2001); Mozzarelli C. (ed.), Federico Borromeo principe e mecenate, thematic issue of Studia Borromaica 18 (Milan: 2004); Prodi P., "Borromeo, Federico", Dizionario biografico degli Italiani (henceforth, DBI) 13 (1971) 33-42. On Borromeo's relationship with the scientific culture: Ferro R., "Accademia dei Lincei e res publica litteraria: Justus Ryckius, Erycius Puteanus e Federico Borromeo", in Battistini A. – Angelis G. De – Olmi G. (eds.), All'origine della scienza moderna: Federico Cesi e l'Accademia dei Lincei (Bologna: 2007) 203-270. I gratefully acknowledge Wietse de Boer, David Young Kim, and Sarah Joan Moran for their valuable suggestions and comments.

² Newer literature on Paleotti's *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane* includes: Deen Schildgen B., "Cardinal Paleotti and the *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane*", in Feigenbaum G. – Ebert-Schifferer S. (eds.), *Sacred Possessions: Collecting Italian Religious Art*, Issues & Debates 20 (Los Angeles: 2011) 8–16; Bianchi I., *La politica delle immagini nell'età della Controriforma: Gabriele Paleotti teorico e committente* (Bologna: 2008); Steinemann H., *Eine Bildtheorie zwischen Repräsentation und Wirkung: Kardinal Gabriele Paleottis "Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane"* (1582), Studien zur Kunstgeschichte 164 (Hildesheim: 2006); Baumgarten J.M., "Wirkungsästhetik und Wechselwirkungen: Kunst

emerged from a climate of religious reform that prevailed in Italy in the 1590s, and the city of Rome offered many opportunities for exchange between reform-minded laymen and -women as well as religious professionals. Also founded in 1593 with the participation of Federico Zuccaro, the *Congregazione dei Nobili* at the Professed House of the Gesù provided another social setting where advocates of religious reform met to perform spiritual exercises or 'spiritual recreations' (*ricreazioni spirituali*), as this new kind of religious practice was called, aimed at the spiritual formation and restoration of the soul.³ As indicated by the synonymous use of 'ricreazioni' and 'esercizi', 'ricreazioni spirituali' were generally understood as a set of spiritual activities, performed in solitude or small groups that would instruct and refresh the soul.⁴

In this essay, the Sacri Monti are considered as offering yet another stage for such 'recreations'; particularly, we will consider how the affective and therapeutic potential of religious images was tested and explored. I shall argue that the remoteness of these sacred landscapes and natural sites in the alpine regions of Italy and Switzerland rendered them especially suitable for the deployment of various new modes of spirituality – ascetic, penitential, and therapeutic – in which the faculty of the imagination as the most contested of the inner senses played a central role. While geographically distant from each other the sacred landscape of Varallo (as 'new Jerusalem' in the Alps) and the 'urbs sacra' of Rome functioned as interlinked sites where new forms of spirituality were being explored by some of the same protagonists of religious reform. Engaging both mind and body, inner and outer senses, these spiritual 'exercises' or 'recreations', as they were called, were motivated by an interest in further developing the potential of Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* as a means of shaping, healing,

und Rhetorik in den Traktaten Carlo Borromeos, Gabriele Paleottis und Roberto Bellarminos", in Laufhütte M. (ed.), *Künste und Natur in Diskursen der Frühen Neuzeit*, Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung 35, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: 2000), vol. I, 515–534; Jones P.M., "Art Theory as Ideology: Gabriele Paleotti's Hierarchical Notion of Painting's Universality and Reception", in Farago C. (ed.), *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America* 1450–1650 (New Haven – London: 1995) 127–139.

³ Imorde J., "Künstlerische Theorie und religiöse Praxis im römischen Frühbarock", in Weddigen, *Federico Zuccaro* 147–168, here 166–168. Members of the *Congregazione dei Nobili* included Cardinals Roberto Bellarmino, Federico Borromeo, Francesco Maria del Monte, Gabriele Paleotti, and the poet Torquato Tasso.

⁴ In his "Ragionamenti interni" (published in the *Opere*, Venice: Baglioni, 1616), Guido Casoni identifies 'solitude' with 'recreation of the soul': 'O solitudine, ricreazione dell'animo; custode fida e sicura dell'uomo, ministra della contemplazione, instromento per fabbricare nell'anima un paradiso, scala per ascendere al cielo'. I cite from Battaglia S., *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 26 vols. (Turin: 1961–2008), vol. XVI, 164–165.

and reforming the soul. After Carlo Borromeo's death shortly following his last visit to Varallo, the individual chapels were increasingly employed for the most unique element of the Ignatian prayer, the 'composition of place', achieved through engaging the 'five senses of the imagination' and especially the 'sight of the imagination' ('vista de la ymaginación') or the 'imaginative sight' ('vista ymaginativa'), as Ignatius called it.⁵ In his enormously influential Meditaciones de los mysterios de nuestra sancta fe, first published in Valladolid in 1605, but soon translated into other European languages and Latin, the Spanish Jesuit Luis de la Puente (1554–1624) considers the soul's 'imaginative faculty' both an impediment and 'ayde to the exercise of mental prayer'.6 The controversial discussions about the construction of some of the chapels of the pilgrimage site also reflected increasing anxieties about controlling the visitors' senses and imagination. This essay explores how the pilgrimage site at Varallo, as a space formed by art and nature, both reflected and gave rise to competing and often conflicting notions about the impact of material images on the bodies and minds of the viewers.

Zuccaro's account of his journey to the Sacri Monti is included in the first of a series of letters published under the title *Il passaggio per Italia* in 1608.⁷ Written during the Turin carnival of 1606, this first letter is addressed to Pierleone Casella (ca. 1540–1620), a lawyer and theologian in Rome as

⁵ There is a rich literature on the Jesuit 'composition of place' (compositio loci) and the 'application of the senses' (applicatio sensuum). Recent studies include: Largier N., "Die Applikation der Sinne. Mittelalterliche Ästhetik als Phänomenologie rhetorischer Effekte", in Braun M. – Young C. (eds.), Das fremde Schöne: Dimensionen des Ästhetischen in der Literatur des Mittelalters (Berlin: 2007) 43–60; Fabre P.-A., Ignace de Loyola: Le lieu de l'image. Le problème de la composition de lieu dans les pratiques spirituelles et artistiques jésuites de la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle (Paris: 1992); Endean P., "The Ignatian Prayer of the Senses", The Heythrop Journal 31 (1990) 319–418; Erdei K., Auf dem Wege zu sich selbst: Die Meditation im 16. Jahrhundert. Eine funktionsanalytische Gattungsbeschreibung, Wolfenbürteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissanceforschung 8 (Wiesbaden: 1990). For Jesuit concerns voiced about the 'composition of place' see Göttler C., Last Things: Art and the Religious Imagination in the Age of Reform, Proteus: Studies in Early Modern Identity Formation 2 (Turnhout: 2010) 278–317.

⁶ I cite from Puente, Lewis of, *Meditations upon the Mysteries of our Holie Faith, with the Practise of Mental Prayer Touching the Same*, trans. John Heigham, 2 vols. (Saint-Omer: 1619), vol. I, 23. On this passage: Göttler, *Last Things* 277; see further Boer W. de, "Invisible Contemplation: A Paradox in the Spiritual Exercises", in Enenkel K. – Melion W. (eds.), *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self: Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture*, Intersections 17 (Leiden: 2011) 233–256.

⁷ In the following I cite from Zuccari F., *Il passaggio per Italia*, ed. A. Ruffino (Lavis: 2007). For a full discussion of Zuccaro's *Il passaggio per Italia* and the diverse 'ricreazioni' Zuccaro encountered, see David Young Kim, *The Travelling Artist in the Italian Renaissance: Geography, Style and the Poetics of Mobility*, Ph.D. dissertation (Harvard University:

well as a member of the prestigious Accademia de gl'Incitati in Rome, to which Cesare Ripa also belonged.⁸ As Zuccaro asserts, his intention was not so much to write a letter, but rather to 'give a narration' about the 'various and diverse recreations' he had 'seen and experienced' after his departure from Rome in June 1603. The Sacri Monti figure among the recreational sites, which Zuccaro further divided into 'places of devotion', 'places of entertainment', and 'places of pleasure'. Within the sphere of religion this new kind of recreational or therapeutic spirituality coincided with a revival of interest in ancient eremitical life. 10 Toward the end of the sixteenth century, with the increasing dissemination of spiritual exercises and mental prayers, a new type of devotional retreat emerged, as Fabio Barry and, more recently, Arnold A. Witte have shown with many examples.¹¹ Situated in an Alpine landscape with a long, partially legendary, tradition of hermit dwellings, the history of the Sacri Monti at Varallo, Crea, Orta, and Varese is intimately linked to this new religious habitus centring on private prayer and meditation.¹²

^{2009).} I thank David Young Kim for sharing the manuscript of the chapter on Zuccaro ("Mobility, the Senses and the Elision of Style") with me.

⁸ Ripa Cesare, *Iconologia overo descrittione dell'imagini universali cavate dall'antichità et da altri luoghi* (Rome, Gio. Gigliotti: 1593) 216 (under 'poesia'): 'Tra questi ancora non tiene l'ultimo luogo il Sig. Pier Lione Casella, che, oltre l'esser Eccellente compositore di Poesia, è di buonissimi costume, e di vita essemplare'. For Casella and his *Elogia Illustrium Artificium*, see Gombrich E.H., "An Early Seventeenth-Century Canon of Artistic Excellence: Pierleone Casella's Elogia Illustrium Artificium of 1606", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987) 224–232, at 225.

⁹ Zuccari, *Il passaggio*, ed. Ruffino 10: 'Farò non una lettera, ma una narrazione di più cose viste e passate, che non seranno, secondo me, se non di gusto e trattenimento suo e de' amorevoli amici: poscia che in questo mio viaggio ho visto e passato varie e diverse ricreazioni, cose degne tutte da essere intese, sì in soggetto di aver visto varii luoghi di devozione, come di spasso e di piacere'.

¹⁰ For the importance of the notions of 'piacere' and 'dilettazione' received from nature and art, see also Jones "Art Theory as Ideology" 127–151.

¹¹ Witte A.A., *The Artful Hermitage: The Palazzetto Farnese as a Counter-Reformation Diaeta* (Rome: 2008). See also the foundational essay by Barry F., "'Pray to thy Father which is in Secret': The Tradition of coretti, romitorii and Lanfranco's Hermit Cycle at the Palazzo Farnese", in Imorde J. – Neumeyer F. – Weddigen T. (eds.), *Barocke Inszenierung* (Emsdetten: 2000) 190–221.

¹² The literature on the Sacri Monti is very rich. For a useful overview: Zanzi L. – Zanzi P. (eds.), Atlante dei Sacri Monti prealpini (Milan: 2002). An inspiring study is by Lasansky D.M., "Body Elision: Acting out the Passion at the Italian Sacri Monti", in Hairston J.L. – Stephens W. (eds.), The Body in Early Modern Italy (Baltimore: 2010) 249–273. See further: Langé S., Il mistero e il luogo: Paesaggio e spiritualità nei nove Sacri Monti, Patrimonio dell'UNESCO (Busto Arsizio: 2008); Zardin D., "I Sacri Monti e la cultura religiosa e artistica della Controriforma", Memorandum: Memória e história em psicologia 9 (2005), 105–120; Tuniz D. (ed.), I Sacri Monti nella cultura religiosa e artistica del Nord Italia (Milan: 2005); Barbero A. (ed.), Atlante dei Sacri Monti, Calvari e complessi devozionali europei: Atlas of

In 1605, the year after his visit to the Sacri Monti, Zuccaro appealed in a published 'letter' to 'princes and lords' who were 'lovers of drawing, painting, sculpture, and architecture' to establish academies for the study of these arts. The letter is dedicated to Archbishop Federico Borromeo who had 'told him that he wanted to found [an academy] in Milan'; lauding Borromeo's 'immense taste, delight, and knowledge of these studies', Zuccaro commends his example to other worldly and ecclesiastical rulers.¹³ There is much evidence that Borromeo conferred with his more experienced friend about his plans to reform the visual arts by establishing an academy for painters, sculptors, and architects. On his journey to the Sacri Monti, Zuccaro was accompanied by Cesare Nebbia (1536–1614) who had just completed a fresco cycle with episodes from the life of the 'blessed' Carlo Borromeo at the Collegio Borromeo in Pavia, founded by Carlo Borromeo in 1561.¹⁴ Commissioned by Federico Borromeo, the cycle includes a fresco depicting, according to its titulus, Carlo's 'pious meditations, fasting, and other macerations of the body at the Sacro Monte, [which] were not hidden signs for the preparation of death' [Fig. 1]. Like the Collegio Borromeo, the Sacro Monte at Varallo was intimately associated with the name of Federico's deceased cousin, the venerated archbishop of Milan whose canonization Federico advocated with fervour. ¹⁶ In fact, Carlo Borromeo's support of the pilgrimage site had been such that he

Holy Mountains, Calvaries and Devotional Complexes in Europe (Novara: 2001); Barbero A.—Magro P. (eds.), Saggio storico sulla devozione alla Via Crucis [...] di Amédée (Teetaert) da Zedelgem (Ponzano Monferrato: 2004); Landgraf G., Die Sacri Monti im Piemont und in der Lombardei: Zwischen Wirklichkeitsillusion und Einbeziehung der Primärrealität, Europäische Hochschulschriften, Series XXVIII (History of Art) 362 (Frankfurt a.M. et al.: 2000); Vaccaro L. — Riccardi F. (eds.), Sacri Monti: Devozione, arte e cultura della Controriforma, Edizioni universitarie Jaca 88 (Milan: 1992); Zanzi L. (ed.), Sacri Monti e dintorni: Studi sulla cultura religiosa ed artistica della Controriforma (Milan: 1990); Freedberg D., The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response (Chicago: 1989) 192–201; Leatherbarrow D., "The Image and Its Setting", RES 14 (1987) 107–122; Frangi G., Sacri Monti delle Alpi (Milan: 1982).

¹³ Zuccaro F., "Lettera a' prencipi, et signori amatori del dissegno, pittura, scultura, et architettura", in Heikamp D. (ed.), *Scritti d'arte di Federico Zuccaro* (Florence: 1961) 109–117, at 116–117.

¹⁴ On the relationship between Federico Zuccaro and Federico Borromeo see Jones, *Federico Borromeo* 145–147, and passim. On the frescoes of the Salone of the Collegio Borromeo see most recently Burzer K., *San Carlo Borromeo: Konstruktion und Inszenierung eines Heiligenbildes im Spannungsfeld zwischen Mailand und Rom*, I Mandorli 15 (Munich: 2011) 113–136. Zuccaro created one of the monumental wall paintings on the front sides of the hall. Ibid. 131–132.

¹⁵ Burzer, San Carlo Borromeo 128–129.

 $^{^{16}}$ Zuccari, $\it Il\ passaggio,$ ed. Ruffino
 16 : '[...] fabricato ad imitazione e concorrenza di quello di Varallo'.



Fig. 1. Cesare Nebbia, Carlo Borromeo at the Sacro Monte of Varallo (1604). Fresco. Pavia, Collegio Borromeo, Salone. Image © Archivio fotografico Almo Collegio Borromeo.

came to be known as its second founder. Borromeo had died shortly after his last visit to the Sacro Monte in 1584, and the news of his saintly death, circulating among Europe's religious elites, caused a fervent revival of the pilgrimage site. This, in turn, motivated the construction of other Sacri Monti in the Italian Alps. My contribution is about this early history of the 'reform' of the site, which, as I shall argue, was shaped by a new interest in the bodily effects caused by 'naturalistic' or 'lifelike' art, presented in 'natural' surroundings. The first part focuses on the most celebrated chapel of the Sacro Monte at Varallo, which served as the prestigious model for all further decorations: the Calvary Chapel by the Valsesian artist Gaudenzio Ferrari (d. 1546). I consider its status in post-Tridentine literature on the sacred arts as well as attempts to create architectural frames that would heighten the emotional appeal of the decorations in that and other chapels. The second part is about two newer chapels and their interiors dedicated to scenes of temptation - the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and the temptation of Christ in the desert – and addresses, in particular, the ambivalent functions and meanings of the Sacro Monte as Golgotha and the Garden of Eden, as site of the Passion and as site of temptation and sin.

1. Assault on the Senses

At this point a few words about Carlo Borromeo's involvement in the history of Varallo are important. Borromeo's most famous journey to the Sacro Monte took place in October of 1584, a few weeks before his death on 3 November 1584. As reported by Carlo Bascapè, the visit was preceded by a pilgrimage to the Holy Shroud in Turin Cathedral. When the 46-year-old archbishop, famed for his austerity and devotion, arrived at Varallo, his mind was already impregnated with the Passion of Christ. There, despite his physical exhaustion, Borromeo practised a two-week programme of spiritual exercises, administered by his father confessor, the Jesuit Francesco Adorno (ca. 1530–1586). The account, published by Carlo Bascapè (1550–1615), Borromeo's secretary, in both Latin and Italian a few

¹⁷ For Borromeo's involvement in the transfer of the Holy Shroud from Chambéry to Turin Cathedral in 1578: Grossman S., "The Sovereignty of the Painted Image: Poetry and the Shroud of Turin", in Jones P.M. – Worcester T. (eds.), *From Rome to Eternity: Catholicism and the Arts in Italy, ca. 1550–1650*, Culture, Beliefs, and Traditions 14 (Leiden: 2002) 179–222, here 185–187; for the ways, in which the presence of the Shroud shaped the religious imagery and imagination see the contribution by Andrew R. Casper in this volume.



Fig. 2. Gaudenzio Ferrari (ascribed to), *Christ, Chapel of the Flagellation*. Polychromed sculpture. Varallo, Sacro Monte. Image © Studio Mariano Dallago.

days after Borromeo's death, stressed the austerity of Borromeo's ascetic practice.¹⁸ At Varallo, Borromeo might have found such an image in the oldest wooden sculptures attributed to Gaudenzio Ferrari: the scourged and mocked Christ in the Chapel of the Flagellation [Fig. 2]; and the dead Christ in the Sepulchre of Christ, the oldest chapel at Varallo that best satisfied Borromeo religious needs.¹⁹ At that time, religious professionals became increasingly aware of the physical changes that certain images

¹⁸ On Carlo Bascapè see *DBI* 7 (1970) 55–58 (P. Prodi). An account of Borromeo's last visit to the Sacro Monte is included in Bascapè Carlo, *De vita et rebus gestis Caroli* [...] *libri septem* (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1592) 257–261. The seminal essay on Carlo Borromeo's presence at Varallo is by Longo P.G., "Il Sacro Monte di Varallo nella seconda metà del XVI secolo", in *Da Carlo Borromeo a Carlo Bascapè: La pastorale di Carlo Borrmeo e il Sacro Monte di Arona* (Novara: 1985) 41–140, especially 85–101 (on Borromeo's last visit to Varallo in 1584). See also: Stoppa A.L., "I quattro pellegrinaggi di San Carlo al Sacro Monte di Varallo", in *I Sacri Monti di Varallo e Arona dal Borromeo al Bascapè* (Novara: 1995) 15–40. For the imagery of St. Carlo Borromeo at Varallo: Stefani Perrone S., "Sacro Monte di Varallo: Il Calvario montano di San Carlo", in *San Carlo e la Valsesia: Iconografia del culto di San Carlo* (Borgosesia: 1984) 29–46.

¹⁹ On the scourged Christ in the Chapel of the Flagellation: Venturoli P., "Le statue in legno e in terracotta della Cappella della Crocifissione e il problema di Gaudenzio scultore", in Filippis E. De (ed.), *Gaudenzio Ferrari: La Crocifissione del Sacro Monte di Varallo* (Turin: 2006) 35–56, here 47 and 49.

could effect on the bodies and minds of their viewers. The Friar Minor Francesco Panigarola (1548–1594), spiritual counselor to Carlo Emanuele, Duke of Savoy (1562–1630), and Borromeo's friend, asserted in his *Cento ragionamenti sopra la passione di Nostro Signore* of 1585 that 'looking at well-done paintings and images of the Passion of Christ' was a 'remedy to increase within us our pain about Christ's death'.²⁰

The 'notable effects caused by pious and devout images' had also been treated a few years earlier in chapter 26 of book one of Bishop Gabriele Paleotti's Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane of 1582. Paleotti was one of the experts on sacred art whom Carlo Borromeo had asked to review his manuscript on the 'punti di passione', a planned treatise of meditation on the Passion of Christ. As Paleotti asserts at the beginning of the chapter, he was here not interested in the 'supernatural effects' of images caused by 'celestial force', which he had treated elsewhere, but in 'those effects which could be called natural, supported, however, by the highest grace'. ²¹ He then refers to 'what had been affirmed by philosophers and physicians', namely that depending on the 'concetti that our fantasy apprehends from the forms of the things, such firm impressions are left on it that they result in remarkable alterations and signs in the bodies'.²² To further illustrate his point, Paleotti also consulted the chapter on the power of the imagination of women in the widely disseminated treatise *The Secret Miracles of Nature* by the Dutch physician Laevinius Lemnius (1505–1568): women, Lemnius claimed, 'will produce something similar to what [they] beheld' when conceiving the child. Like Lemnius, Paleotti cites Pliny who said that 'there are more differences in man than in animals' since 'the quicknesse of his thought, the nimblenesse of his mind, and variety of his wit, imprint divers marks'. 23 Paleotti concludes that 'since our imagination is so suited to receive impressions, there is undoubtedly

²⁰ Panigarola Francesco, *Cento ragionamenti sopra la passione di Nostro Signore* (Venice, Rampazetto: 1585). I cite after Longo, "Il Sacro Monte di Varallo nella seconda metà del XVI secolo" 89–90.

 $^{^{21}}$ Paleotti Gabriele, "Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane [1582]", in Barocchi P. (ed.), Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento, 3 vols. (Bari: 1960–1963), vol. II, 230: '[...] intendiamo ora solamente di ragionare di quelli effetti che possono chiamarsi naturali, aiutati però dalla superna grazia'.

²² Paleotti, "Discorso" 230: 'Per dimostrar questo, potressimo cominciare da quello che viene affirmato da' filosofi e medici, dicendo che, secondo i varii concetti che apprende la nostra fantasia dalle forme delle cose, si fanno in essa così salde impressioni, che da quelle ne derivano alterazioni e segni notabili nei corpi'.

²³ I cite from Lemnius Levinus, *The Secret Miracles of Nature in Four Books* (London, Jo. Streater: 1658) 11. Cf. *The Elder Pliny on the Human Animal: Natural History, Book* 7, trans., introd., comm. M. Beagon (Oxford: 2005) 70, 213–215 (7.52).

no stronger or more efficacious instrument than images made from life (imagini fatte al vivo) that almost violate the incautious senses'. 24 To the list of historical examples about the remarkable effects images had on St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Mary of Egypt, and others, Paleotti adds a contemporary example related to him by a 'trustworthy' Dominican from Milan about a man who immediately abandoned his firm decision to kill one of his enemies when he entered a church and looked at an image of a Crucifix. Finally, Paleotti encourages the painter to seize the 'occasion which presents itself to him each time when he has to make a sacred image, confiding in divine aid [...] that he might impress in [the minds of] people the true cult of God and the greatness of the eternal things and, as a celestial minister, convert the hearts of whole nations, change them into another form and take them up into heaven'.25 The chapter belongs to a series of chapters that address the functions and effects of images. Referring to Augustine's well-known triad, Paleotti asserts that images should delight, instruct, and move, and he defends their use against the 'heretics' as a means to achieve cognition of God.²⁶

From its Franciscan beginnings, Varallo had served as a 'laboratory' to explore the impact of lifelike imagery on the beholder's body, mind, and the senses. At the time of Zuccaro's visit the Sacro Monte at Varallo consisted of about 45 chapels, which re-enacted the events that took place in Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Mount Sinai, Gethsemane, Calvary, the Mount of Olives, and the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Zuccaro, moreover, witnessed the new fervour behind the construction and renovation which took place at the site. Bascapè, bishop of Novara since 1593, was working to transform the sacred landscape in such a way that it would conform to Carlo Borromeo's wishes. As Carlo Borromeo's biographer and long-time secretary, Bascapè was uniquely aware of the deep impact the site had made on the deceased archbishop's mind. In a letter dated 1603, Bascapè expressed his hopes that the 'most illustrious Monsignore Fed-

²⁴ Paleotti, "Discorso" 230: 'Essendo donque la imaginativa nostra così atta a ricevere tali impressioni, non è dubbio non ci essere istrumento più forte o più efficace a ciò delle imagini fatte al vivo, che quasi violentano i sensi incauti'.

²⁵ Paleotti, "Discorso" ²33: 'Dalle quali cose, per non stenderci maggiormente, potrà il pittore facilmente giudicare la importante e segnalata occasione che se gli appresenta ogni volta che ha da fare una imagine sacra, confidandosi nel divino aiuto che col mezzo di quella potrà imprimere nel popolo il vero culto di Dio e la grandezza delle cose eterne, e convertire come ministro celeste i cuori delle nazioni intiere, e cangiarli in altra forma, e seco rapirli in cielo'.

²⁶ Jones, "Art Theory as Ideology".

erico Borromeo' would 'bring to completion the reform of this place the foundation of which had been laid by the blessed Cardinal'.27 In a letter of 1604 - the year of Zuccaro's visit - Bascapè called the Sacro Monte of Varallo a 'solitary place' and a 'place for contemplation' ('luogo solitario et di contemplatione') thus identifying the site as a place for the practice of mental prayer according to the model Carlo Borromeo had promoted. Borromeo's nightly prayers at the chapels dedicated to the Passion of Christ were often described in the religious literature of the time, perhaps most impressively by Bascapè himself.²⁸ At the centre of concern both for Borromeo and Bascapè were what was then called the vagaries of the imagination, which were traditionally associated with meditation, private prayer, and ascetic practice. The 'reforms' Bascapè introduced at Varallo aimed at taming the power of the imagination, so that it would 'not wander about' but instead attach itself to the Passion of Christ.²⁹ However, as will be described in the following, the 'reform' of the pilgrimage site and its transformation into a solitary place of meditation was a project of longer duration that already begun in the 1560s and went through different phases with changing foci and conditions.

2. 'Imitare la mano del pittore Gaudenzio': The Calvary Chapel at Varallo

The Sacro Monte at Varallo was founded at the end of the fifteenth century by the Franciscan Observant friar Bernardino Caimi (d. 1499), who had been guardian of the Holy Sepulchre of Christ.³⁰ Its very first chapels – those of the Sepulchre of Christ, the Ascension, and, probably,

²⁷ Longo P.G, "'Un luogo sacro... quasi senz'anima': Carlo Bascapè e il Sacro Monte di Varallo", in *Carlo Bascapè: Sulle orme del Borromeo: Coscienza e azione pastorale in un vescovo di fine Cinquecento* (Novara: 1994) 369–426, at 397, note 1: 'Spero che Mons. Ill.mo (Federico Borromeo) con l'autorità sua hora condurrà il negotio a bon fine: et sì come il beato cardinal mise il fondamento della riforma di quel luogo, così S.S. Ill.ma hora le darà perfettione'.

²⁸ Longo, "Un luogo sacro" 397, note 2.

²⁹ I cite from Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, ed. and trans. J.K. Ryan (New York et al.: 2003) 77 (II.4: 'The Subject of the Mystery, the Third Point of Preparation'). For the context of this passage see Plett H.F., *Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture* (Berlin: 2004) 230–232. Francis de Sales was closely connected to Carlo Emanuele, Duke of Savoy. Two editions of de Sales' book appeared in Lyon in 1609.

³⁰ Morisi A., "Caimi, Bernardino", *DBI* 16 (1973) 347–349; Sesalli Francesco (ed.), *Breve Descrittione del Sacro Monte di Varallo di Valsesia* (Novara: 1566), fol. 17r; for the 1566 and 1570 edition, see Durio A., "Francesco Sesalli e la prima 'Descrittione' del Sacro Monte di Varallo", *Bolletino Storico per la Provincia di Novara* 21, 2–4 (1927) 1–32, here 17.

the Sepulchre of the Virgin – were imitations of the pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land.³¹ At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Varallo was associated with a new kind of pristine Christianity focused on Christ, According to the Milanese chancellor who visited Varallo in 1507, the 'simplicity of design' ('fabricae simplicitas'), the 'masonry without contrivance' ('sine arte structura') and the 'natural surroundings' ('ingenuus situs') surpassed the whole of antiquity.³² A considerable proportion of the structures was created under the direction of Gaudenzio Ferrari, an artist from Valsesia who began work at the Sacro Monte of Varallo in the 1510s.³³ With their life-sized polychromed sculptures and illusionistic wall-paintings, Ferrari's furnishings marked a shift from a spatial or architectural re-creation of a sacred prototype to a theatrical staging of the history of salvation. The copiousness of the interior decorations contrasted with the simplicity of the architecture and encouraged a kind of 'reading' and 'travelling' through the Passion events, in which all senses were engaged.³⁴ When Ferrari moved his workshop to Vercelli in 1527 or 1528, the previously thriving pilgrimage site at Varallo fell into oblivion und was only revitalized in the 1560s, in a different religious climate after the Council of Trent. Over the following generations the site was shaped by different institutions and social groups, the lay administrators (with their different interests), the Observant fathers (who were often driven by economic needs), and, finally, the reform-minded bishops. Bascapè especially made use of the authority bestowed on his office by the Council of Trent.³⁵ However, Gaudenzio Ferrari's art kept its reputation and prestige throughout all phases of the development of the site.

This applies especially to the most venerated chapel at the Sacro Monte of Varallo, Ferrari's *Cappella del Calvario*, which served as the artistic reference point for all subsequent decorations both at Varallo and other Sacri Monti [Fig. 3]. For example, the contract between the guardians of

³¹ Stefani Perrone S., "La 'Gerusalemme' delle origini nella secolare vicenda edificatoria del Sacro Monte di Varallo", in Vaccaro – Riccardi, *Sacri Monti* 27–41, here 31.

³² I cite from Nova A., "Popular' Art in Renaissance Italy: Early Response to the Holy Mountain at Varallo", in Farago C. (ed.), *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America* 1450–1650 (New Haven: 1995) 113–126, 319–321, at 320, notes 44 and 47.

³³ Sacchi R., "Ferrari, Gaudenzio", *DBI* 46 (1996) 573–581, at 575–576.

³⁴ For the sensory-emotional quality of spiritual reading and meditation: Carruthers M., *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: 1990) 173–174. See also Göttler, *Last Things* 111–114.

³⁵ The decree 'On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints and Sacred Images' was issued during the proceedings of the Council's very last session, on 3 December 1566: *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. H.J. Schroeder (Charlotte, NC: 2011) ^{218–220}.



Fig. 3. Gaudenzio Ferrari, *Calvary Chapel* (completed 1521). Polychromed sculpture with other media. Varallo, Sacro Monte. Image © Archivio della Riserva Naturale Speciale del Sacro Monte di Varallo.

the fabric at Varallo and the Flemish sculptor Jean Wespin or Giovanni Tabacchetti (ca. 1569–1615) for the Chapel of the Way to Calvary stipulated that the statues needed 'to conform with and resemble all other statues in the Monte Calvario [chapel]'; and that the work should be given 'all possible perfection to the praise of God and for the good taste of the visitors'. When the Lombard painter Pier Francesco Mazzucchelli known as Il Morazzone (1571–1626) began working on the frescoes of that same chapel in 1602, he was required by contract to use 'very good colours and adorn the heavens, angels, [and] human figures as naturally as possible, in imitation of the Chapel of the Monte Calvario'. The 1609 contract for

³⁶ Longo, "Un luogo sacro" 412–413: '[...] essere conforme almeno per la maggior parte et assomiglianti alle altre statue che sono nel Monte Calvario, et di ogni possibile vaghezza a fine le dette due opere habbino in sé la dovuta conformità, et l'opera resti con ogni più perfettione si potrà a laudi di Dio et a maggior gusto delli visitanti'.

³⁷ Filippis E. De, "'Cieli, angeli figure humane al naturale più che sia possibile ad imitatione della Cappella del Monte Calvario': La fortuna della Cappella della Crocifissione al Sacro Monte", in eadem (ed.), Gaudenzio Ferrari: La Crocifissione del Sacro Monte di Varallo

the scenographic frescoes in the Chapel of the *Ecce Homo*, a collaborative masterwork of Giovanni D'Enrico and Il Morazzone, included the clause that the latter should 'imitate the hand of the painter Ferrari and the quality of several figures which are in the Monte Calvario [Chapel]'.38

At the time of Zuccaro's visit Ferrari's Calvary Chapel had long held cult status as a monument of piety created in pre-iconoclastic times. The prestige of the chapel is further evidenced by the inscriptions that several visitors from Italy, Switzerland, and Southern Germany left on the walls until 1594 when Bishop Bascapè prohibited by decree graffiti of any kind in the chapels of the Sacro Monte.³⁹ Recent investigations have confirmed that Ferrari was working on the interior decoration of the Crucifixion Chapel between 1517 and 1520 – in fact, in the very first years of the Reformation in the north – and that the chapel was completed by autumn 1521, the dates given by the earliest known graffiti on the walls of the chapel.⁴⁰ In a recent essay, Elena De Filippis has argued that Ferrari's Crucifixion Chapel replaced an older structure, mentioned in the earliest description of the 'chapels of the Passion founded on the mountain of Varallo', published in Milan in 1514.⁴¹ Like the other early chapels, which were constructed in imitation of their prototypes in the Holy Land, this first chapel of the 'Monte Calvario' most probably resembled the Calvary Chapel at Jerusalem with its two doors on the north wall.⁴²

When Ferrari began working on the Monte Calvario Chapel he retained the old and venerated wooden image of the crucified Christ – now the

⁽Turin: 2006) 75-89, at 79: 'di cieli, angeli figure humane al naturale più che sia possibile ad imitando della Cappella del Monte Calvario, con quale l'atto representato tiene molta assomiglianza'.

³⁸ I cite from Galloni P., Sacro Monte di Varallo: Origine e svolgimento delle opere d'arte (Varallo: 1914) 245: '[...] imitare la mano del pittore Gaudenzio e la qualità di alcuni personaggi che sono nel Monte Calvario'.

³⁹ Gentile G., "Sulle tracce degli antichi visitatori: percorsi e graffiti", in De Filippis, Gaudenzio Ferrari 65-73.

⁴⁰ The seminal study on the Chapel of the Crucifixion is: De Filippis, *Gaudenzio Ferrari*. In the context of my essay the following contributions in De Filippis's 2006 volume have been of particular importance: Romano G., "Per Gaudenzio al Sacro Monte" 15–20; Sacchi R., "'Chi non ha veduto quel sepolcro, non può dir di sapere che cosa sia pittura'" 21-34; Venuroli P., "Le statue in legno e in terracotta della Cappella della Crocifissione e il problema di Gaudenzio scultore" 35–56; De Filippis, "'Cieli, angeli figure humane'" 75–90. Newer literature further includes: Filippis E. De, "La crocifissione secondo Gaudenzio: Nuove proposte sulla 'Crocifissione' del Sacro Monte di Varallo", Prospettiva 129 (2008) 41-56.

De Filippis, "La crocifissione", esp. 41–46.
 De Filippis, "La crocifissione" 45. De Filippis refers to the mid-fourteenth-century description by Fra Niccolò da Poggibonsi, Libro d'oltramare, ed. A. Bacchi della Lega, 2 vols. (Bologna: 1881), vol. I, 80 (cap. XXVII: "Delle fattezze di monte Calvario, dove Cristo fu crocifisso").

only wooden sculpture in that chapel – surrounding it with almost ninety life-sized and lifelike polychrome statues made from terracotta, many of them with real hair, glass eyes, and period costumes. The artificial elevation simulating natural stone upon which the figures are arranged suggests the staging of a Golgotha in the here and now. On the wall, flat paintings alternate with figures and motifs in low relief, thus creating a transition between the represented space of the biblical story and the beholder's actual space. Life-sized sculptures of horses as well as props of various kinds add to the allure of the decoration. As Elena De Filippis has shown, Ferrari expanded upon a stylistic vocabulary first developed in his large fresco of the Crucifixion on the tramezzo of the Observant Franciscan church of Santa Maria delle Grazie at Varallo. Signed and dated in 1513, this spectacular wall painting combines modern currents in Italian and especially Lombard art with archaizing features evoking the energy of an earlier religious style [Fig. 4].

Both Ferrari's Crucifixion on the tramezzo in Santa Maria delle Grazie and the frescoed decoration of the Calvary Chapel at the Sacro Monte include two pilgrims who, as revealed by their badges, had travelled to Rome and Santiago de Compostela, respectively, before arriving at their final destination, the 'new Jerusalem' in the Alps, as Varallo was then called [Fig. 5]. In the Calvary Chapel, they are positioned near the entrance of the building. The painted rocky ground on which they are placed merges smoothly into the three-dimensional stage set, which itself separates the sacred event from the space reserved for visitors and viewers. The painted pilgrims with their hats removed look up in awe at the old wooden image of the crucified Christ; at their feet a white dog is curling up to sleep. Right next to these bystanders, the plastic figure of an elderly man in a brown habit turns his bold, wrinkled face toward the entrance of the chapel while gesturing, with his right hand, toward the Crucifixion [Fig. 6]. Observing rather than participating in the event, his function is that of a commentator or mediator between the painted historia and the actual viewer, a figure which Alberti had suggested artists should include.44 The distorted

⁴³ De Filippis, "La crocifissione" 46–51. On fifteenth-century northern Italian tramezzi: Hall M.B., "The Tramezzo in the Italian Renaissance, Revisited", in Gerstel S.E.J. (ed.), Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West (Washington, DC: 2006) 215–233; Imesch Oehry K., Die Kirchen der Franziskanerobservanten in der Lombardei (Essen: 1991); Nova A., "I tramezzi in Lombardia fra XV e XVI secolo: Scene della Passione e devozione francescana", in Dallaj A. (ed.), Il francescanesimo in Lombardia (Milan: 1983) 196–215.

⁴⁴ Alberti, On Painting and On Sculpture: The Latin Texts of "De Pictura" and "De Statua", ed. and trans. C. Grayson (London: 1972) 82–83 (II.42): 'I like there to be someone in the



Fig. 4. Gaudenzio Ferrari, *Crucifixion* (1513). Fresco. Varallo, Santa Maria delle Grazie, tramezzo. Image © Archivio della Riserva Naturale Speciale del Sacro Monte di Varallo.



Fig. 5. Gaudenzio Ferrari, *Calvary Chapel* (completed 1521). Polychromed sculpture with other media. Varallo, Sacro Monte. Detail with two pilgrims. Image © Archivio della Riserva Naturale Speciale del Sacro Monte di Varallo.



Fig. 6. Gaudenzio Ferrari, *Calvary Chapel* (completed 1521). Polychromed sculpture with other media. Varallo, Sacro Monte. Detail with bystander near the entrance of the chapel. Image © Archivio della Riserva Naturale Speciale del Sacro Monte di Varallo.

face with wide staring eyes and a mouth with its corners pulled down is an inventive adaptation of Leonardesque ideas of the grotesque, which were broadly disseminated in these years, especially in northern Italy and Milan.⁴⁵ Similar grotesque prominence is given to the tormentor with the goitre who reaches out to offer Jesus a sponge soaked with vinegar. At a certain distance to the right St. John gazes at the three crosses; behind him the Virgin and two of the other Maries are approaching [Fig. 7]. Two women with children – betraying a mix of curiosity and compassion – are standing right next to the holy women, while other female witnesses appear in the frescoes on the wall behind. The soldiers casting dice for Christ's garment, as described later by Galeazzo Alessi (1512-1572), are further characterized by an impressive display of devices on shields, helmets, and armour. As also observed by Alessi the drama continues in the heavenly realms, extending over the whole vaulted ceiling of the chapel, which is supported by a central column. In a turbulent sky, angels are shown in acrobatic dives and twists – dynamic movements that in the earliest descriptions of the chapel were already associated with the bravura mode of depicting 'scorci'. Gian Paolo Lomazzo (1538–1592), in particular, celebrated Ferrari's mastery in the depiction of what he calls 'the movements of angels', which includes draperies in *cangianti* colours, feathers and hair. In the midst of the angels a sketchy demonic figure, half human, half animal, and surrounded by red flames, is heading toward the scene to snatch the soul of the unrepentant thief.

It has occasionally been claimed in the scholarly literature that the visual devices Ferrari and subsequent artists employed at Varallo were intended to make pilgrims believe they were physically involved in the events depicted.⁴⁶ At the same time, early visitors and commentators such as Francesco Sesalli, Lomazzo, Zuccaro, and others were aware of the conspicuous artifice of the settings, praised both for their 'naturalism'

^{&#}x27;historia' who tells the spectators what is going on, and either beckons them with his hand to look, or with ferocious expression and forbidding glance challenges them not to come near [...]'. On this often-cited passage see Baxandall M., *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: 1972) 71–76.

⁴⁵ Porzio F., "Lomazzo e il realismo grottesco: Un capitolo del primitivismo nel Cinquecento", in *Rabisch: Il grottesco nell'arte del Cinquecento: L'Accademia della Val di Blenio, Lomazzo e l'ambiente Milanese*, exh. cat., Museo Cantonale d'Arte Lugano, ed. M. Kahn-Rossi (Milan: 1998) 23–36.

⁴⁶ Grau O., *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, trans. G. Custance (Cambridge, MA – London: 2003) 41–46.



Fig. 7. Gaudenzio Ferrari, *Calvary Chapel* (completed 1521). Polychromed sculpture with other media. Varallo, Sacro Monte. Detail: Grieving Virgin accompanied by two of the Maries. Image © Archivio della Riserva Naturale Speciale del Sacro Monte di Varallo.

and their devotional efficacy.⁴⁷ The increased interest in the vernacular idiom of Ferrari's art points to a new religious culture of emotion that explored and tested the effects of various visual media on the mind and the senses of the devout. A study of the ways in which Ferrari's art – his 'artificio di molte capelle', as Zuccaro called it – was presented, imitated, framed, shaped, and reformed provides, as I hope to show, a more complex picture of what I would call post-Tridentine art history in the making than a study of the treatises on sacred art alone would provide. Work at Varallo accompanied or even preceded, rather than reflected, the writings on art. Founded by a Franciscan Observant friar at the end of the fifteenth century, the Sacro Monte at Varallo was redesigned and refurbished in the mid-1560s at the commission of the new administrator of the site, Giacomo d'Adda (d. 1580) – a wealthy Milanese patrician connected to Varallo by marriage – and again transformed and reformed in a different spiritual climate in the 1580s, when the patronage gradually shifted from the local aristocracy to religious institutions and, finally, to the bishop of Novara in 1593. In these crucial years of Catholic reform, Varallo's Sacro Monte functioned as a site where new visual and sensual religious experiences could be explored, and as a laboratory where controversial theories of visual and sensual perception were developed, introduced, changed, and changed again. As the site was built and furnished by different artists over time, its history was shaped by different and often contradictory aesthetic and stylistic preferences and inclinations. While the vernacular habitus of Ferrari's interiors became binding for all subsequent decorations, the variations of and references to Ferrari's works – celebrated alternately for their artifice (*arteficio*), 'naturalism', and devotion (*divotione*) – were part of an increased interest, shared by religious professionals, artists, and art critics alike, in the emotional efficacy of artworks, their ability to move and affect the senses of the beholders.

Ferrari's large Crucifixion scenes at Varallo, both in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie and the Sacro Monte consciously made use of pre-Reformation images of the so-called 'volkreicher Kalvarienberg' ('crowded Calvary') which were, however, presented and interpreted in the context of the new currents in Lombard art. The early literature on Gaudenzio

⁴⁷ On the relationships between religion, spirituality, and naturalism in the early modern period: Summer D., *The Judgment of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics* (Cambridge: 1987) esp. 3–9, 311–320; Dempsey C., "The Carracci and the Devout Style in Emilia", in Millon H.A. (ed.), *Emilian Painting of the 16th and 17th Centuries: A Symposium* (Bologna: 1987) 75–87.

Ferrari's figural ensembles at Varallo stressed their naturalism and lifelike veracity. In 1566, Francesco Sesalli writes of the works of Gaudenzio Ferrari, 'both in painting and in sculpture' that 'they are so natural as if nature herself and not art had made them';⁴⁸ he concludes the verses on the Monte Calvario Chapel with the words that 'the whole is neither painted nor in sculpture, but part of nature'.⁴⁹ Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood have drawn attention to the 'temporal flexibility' of (Renaissance) artworks, their ability to recreate and continue earlier historical manners and styles.⁵⁰ In the period after the Council of Trent, the return to older artistic traditions and the revival of them often served broader cultural interests, as it was a powerful means to establish artistic identities and filiations that reached back into pre-Reformation times.

3. The Movement of Angels: Lomazzo on Gaudenzio Ferrari

Initiated by Carlo Borromeo, the debate of the 1580s about the 'reform' of the Sacro Monte at Varallo centered on the appropriate layout and decoration of the individual chapels. Borromeo himself was especially attracted to the Sacro Monte's oldest structure, the architectural copy of the Sepulchre of Christ, which exhibited a life-size polychromed sculpture of the dead Christ traditionally attributed to Gaudenzio Ferrari. Contemplating this faithful and 'lifelike' image of the dead Christ may have further spurred Carlo Borromeo to use ascetic practices, to transform his own body into an image of the suffering Christ. Gaudenzio Ferrari's 'art of movement' was also praised by yet another Milanese, Gian Paolo Lomazzo. Although they had never met – Lomazzo was a mere eight years old when

 $^{^{48}}$ Sesalli, Breve Descrittione (1566), fol. 4r. In the following I cite from Durio, "Francesco Sesalli" 15–31, at 18: 'Nondimeno le infrascritte che o tutte, o la maggior parte, furono fatte da un M. Gaudentio di quella patria, homo veramente molto eccellente così nel dipingere come nella scultura, sono tanto naturali come se la Natura istessa, e non l'arte l'havesse formate'.

⁴⁹ Sesalli, *Breve Descrittione* (1566), fol. 10r. Durio, "Francesco Sesalli" 26: 'E il tutto esser non pinto, nè in scultura | Ma dell'istesso parto di Natura'.

⁵⁰ Nagel A. – Wood C.S., *Anachronic Renaissance* (Brooklyn, NY: 2010) 7–19 ("Plural Temporalities of the Work of Art"). In 1957 Federico Zeri employed the phrase 'arte senza tempo' ('zeitlose Kunst') to describe an art that flourished in Rome of 1580s and 1590s, shortly before the arrival of the Carracci and Caravaggio. Zeri F., *Pittura e controriforma: L'arte senza tempo di Scipione da Gaeta* (Turin: 1957) 84: 'zeitlose Kunst'. For an early review, see Haskell F., *The Burlington Magazine* 100 (1959) 396–399. On the reception of Zeri's influential book: Cropper E. – Dempsey C., "Italian Painting of the Seventeenth Century", *Art Bulletin* 69 (1987) 494–509, at 504–505.

Ferrari died in Milan in 1546 – the younger man calls him his old master ('il mio vecchio precettore') thus placing himself in direct filiation with an artist whom he described, in the Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura, et architettura, as 'not only a witty and knowledgeable painter but also a most profound philosopher and mathematician'. 51 Dedicated to Carlo Emanuele, Duke of Savoy, on 23 June 1584, and with privilege from both Gregory XIII and the Catholic King Philip II of Spain, Lomazzo's Trattato dell'arte was published a few months before Carlo Borromeo assembled his group of experts at the Sacro Monte. Although exact contemporaries, there is no evidence that the paths of Borromeo and Lomazzo ever crossed. Borromeo, moreover, would have regarded Lomazzo's preoccupation with occult and hermetic sciences with suspicion.⁵² However, despite their diverse artistic interests and tastes, Borromeo and Lomazzo both considered Ferrari's chapel decorations as prime examples of religious art. The unique position Gaudenzio Ferrari's art occupies in Lomazzo's writings has so far not been investigated in detail.⁵³ In the following it will be argued that Lomazzo, throughout his written work, exalted Ferrari into an exemplary religious artist following in the footsteps of the ancient painter Timanthes. Timanthes, who was praised by Lomazzo for his ability to show 'piety and religion'.54

Lomazzo pairs Gaudenzio Ferrari with the Greek painter Timanthes most explicitly in the first of a series of poems entitled *De' Pittori (On*

⁵¹ Lomazzo G.P., "Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura et archittetura", in *Scritti sulle arti*, ed. Ciardi G.P., 2 vols. (Florence: 1974), vol. II, 101: 'non solamente saggio pittore, come ho detto altrove, ma profondissimo filosofo e matematico'. According to the autobiography included in the *Grotteschi* of 1587, Lomazzo's first teacher was Gian Battista de la Cerva, a pupil of Ferrari. See Scholl D., *Von den "Grottesken" zum Grotesken: Die Konstituierung einer Poetik des Grotesken in der italienischen Renaissance*, Art Rhetorica 11 (Münster: 2004) 459–460.

⁵² See Ciardi R.P., "Introduzione", in Lomazzo, *Scritti sulle arti*, ed. Ciardi, vol. I, vii–cxii; Bora G., "Milano nell'età di Lomazzo e San Carlo: Riaffermazione e difficoltà di sopravvivenza di una cultura", in *Rabisch* 37–56; Ruffino A., "'Qui son istorie, poesie e chimere': I Grotteschi di Giovan Paolo Lomazzo", in Lomazzo G.P., *Rime ad imitazione de i Grotteschi usati da' pittori con La vita del auttore descritta da lui stesso in rime sciolte*, ed. A. Ruffino (Rome: 2006) VI–VII.

⁵³ Lomazzo's *Trattato* is closely related to the *Idea del Tempio della Pittura*, which was published six years later also with Gottardo Ponzio and dedicated to Philip II. For the interrelationship of the two treatises, see Williams R., Art, *Theory, and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy: From Techne to Metatechne* (Cambridge: 1997) 123–127 (with mentions of previous literature); Ackerman G., "Lomazzo's Treatise on Painting", *Art Bulletin* 49 (1967) 317–326; Klein R., "'Les sept gouverneurs de l'art' selon Lomazzo", *Arte lombarda* 4 (1959) 277–287.

⁵⁴ Lomazzo G.P., "Idea del tempio della pittura", in *Scritti sulle arti*, ed. Ciardi, vol. I, 253: '[...] et in Timante demostrare pietà e religione'.

Painters) in the second book of the Rime ad imitazione de i Grotteschi of 1587.55 The series also includes a poem dedicated to Gaudenzio Ferrari himself, which celebrates the 'extraordinary grace' with which Ferrari expressed 'devotion' and 'supreme majesty' in his art, his 'singular gift' in 'representing movements and affects, celestial and human', as well as 'painting draperies' ('panneggiar'); and, finally, his way to work in clay ('terra'), which further evidences his 'excellent mind and hand'. 56 In the context of the comparison with Timanthes the reference to Ferrari's draperies is of particular interest. Pliny, in an often-cited passage, already viewed Timanthes as 'the only artist in whose works more is always implied than is depicted, and whose art, though consummate, is always surpassed by his ingenium'. Pliny was referring here to Timanthes' celebrated painting of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia and his innovative device of showing the face of Iphigenia's father veiled because he had 'exhausted every possible expression of grief' in representing all other onlookers.⁵⁷ In *De Pictura*, Alberti moves beyond Pliny's formulations, praising Timanthes' device of covering the head of Iphigenia's grieving father 'with cloths' as a means to stimulate the viewer's imagination. This rhetorical means 'thus left more of the [father's] sorrow to be considered in the mind of the onlooker than could be discerned with the eye'.58 In the late sixteenth century, the most extensive interpretation of Timanthes' Iphigenia is, however, by Paleotti,

 $^{^{55}}$ Lomazzo, *Rime ad imitazione de i Grotteschi* 89–90 (II.17: "Conferenza de' pittori antichi e moderni"). Like the *Trattato*, the *Rime* were dedicated to the Duke of Savoy, Carlo Emanuele.

⁵⁶ Lomazzo, *Rime* 96–97 (II.26): 'Di Gaudentio Ferrari. La devotion e maestà suprema | Di chi abitano in ciel, qui giuso in terra | Alla mente di Gaudentio s'afferra;| Sì la mostra pingendo in gratia estrema.| O che lieto gioisca, od egro gema,| S'alcun s'adira, o se crudel si sferra,| Se grave siede, o se pensoso egli erra | S'è pietoso, se di paura trema,| Ha di rappresentar singolar dono;| E questi e quanti son moti, et affetti.| Oltre il bel panneggiar, celesti e humani.| Di lavorar di terra ha certo tono,| Il qual s'inalza al ciel fra gl'altri eletti.| O felici, eccellenti, mente e mani!'

⁵⁷ Cf. The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art, trans. K. Jex-Blake (Chicago: 1968) 116–117 (XXXV.73): 'Eius enim est Iphigenia oratorum laudibus celebrata, qua stante ad aras peritura cum maestos pinxisset omnes praecipueque patruum, et tristitiae omnem imaginem consumpsisset, patris ipsius voltum velavit quem digne non poterat ostendere [...] atque in unius huius operibus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur et, cum sit ars summa, ingenium tamen ultra artem est'. I cite from Pardo M., "The Subject of Savoldo's Magdalene", in Cole M. (ed.), Sixteenth-Century Italian Art (Malden, MA: 2006) 441–484, at 459. Pardo offers an extensive discussion of the rhetorical context of Pliny's passage and its reception in the writings by Alberti and Paleotti. Ibid. 458–462.

⁵⁸ Alberti compares Timanthes' *Sacrifice of Iphigenia* to Giotto's *Navicella* in St. Peter's. Leon Battista Alberti, "De Pictura: On Painting", in idem, *On Painting and On Sculpture: The Latin Texts of De Pictura and De Statua*, ed. and trans. C. Grayson (London: 1972) 82–83 (42, translation modified): '[...] pannis involuit eius caput, ut cuique plus relinqueret quod de illius dolore animo meditaretur, quam quod posset visu discernere'.

who discusses the painting in the chapter on 'imperfect paintings' ('Delle pitture imperfette') in the Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane of 1582. Paleotti employs the rhetorical figure of *aposiopesis*, which he defines as a kind of 'perfect imperfection' or 'diminuition with augmentation', thus as a device of amplification, which by 'being silent about' or 'leaving out something or only alluding to it skilfully adds to the painting's effect on the mind of the viewer.⁵⁹ Paleotti explicitly recommends this visual strategy to the modern painter for the grieving Maries in scenes of the Crucifixion. 60 Lomazzo himself indeed mentions Timanthes' *Iphiaenia* in the chapter on 'compositions of grief' in the sixth book of the *Trattato* of 1584. Timanthes, 'after having exhausted all art and ingenuity and spent all affects could not find a way to represent appropriately the face of Iphigenia's most unhappy father; he thus covered it with cloths leaving it to the onlookers to consider in their minds the greatness of the father's affliction, which he could not have expressed himself with his brush'. 61 Ferrari is compared to Timanthes especially in respect to his skills in engaging the beholder's imagination.

Addressing the 'force and efficacy of movement' ('forza e efficacia de i moti'), book two of Lomazzo's 1584 *Trattato* offers an extensive discussion of what may be called the artifice of Gaudenzio Ferrari's religious works. Lomazzo considered 'motion' as 'the most difficult part to follow in the whole of art and also the most important and most necessary to know'. ⁶² 'Motion' belongs to a kind of knowledge that needs to be 'extracted from

 $^{^{59}}$ Paleotti, "Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane" $_381$: '[...] ricordiamo che ci è una sorte d'imperfezzione, per dir così, perfetta, et una diminuzione con augumento, a guisa di quella figura de' retori chiamata ἀποσιώπησις [aposiopesis] che col tacere significa cose maggiori. Così nella pittura si possono e si devono spesso dipingere le cose in tal maniera, che, col tralasciarne alcuna e solo accennarla destramente, s'imagini lo spettatore cose maggiori tra sé medemo [...]'. See Pardo, "Savoldo's Magdalene" $_459$. For the link between veiling, hiding, and silence on the Greek stage, see Montiglio S., *Silence in the Land of Logos* (Princeton, NJ: 2000) $_{176-180}$.

⁶⁰ Paleotti, "Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane" 382.

⁶¹ Lomazzo, "Trattato dell'arte", ed. Ciardi, vol. II, 317: 'Non è dubbio alcuno che, secondo le persone e loro qualità piú atte alla mestizia, il pianto et il dolore si vuole distribuire e dimostrare; come già bene fece Timante cipriotto in quella tavola nella quale egli superò Collocrotico, dove, avendo fatto nel sacrificio di Ifigenia Calcante mesto, Ulisse molto piú, e consumato tutta l'arte et ingegno in Meneleo abbatuto dal dolore, e spesi tutti gli affetti, non ritrovando in che modo degnamente potesse rappresentare il volto del padre mestissimo, gli coperse la faccia co' panni, lasciando piú da pensare nell'animo la grandezza del dolore suo a riguardanti, che non averebbe egli potuto esprimere col pennello'.

⁶² Lomazzo, "Trattato dell'arte", ed. Ciardi, vol. II, 97–98: '[...] in questo appunto consiste lo spirito e la vita dell'arte, onde i pittori lo sogliono dimandare ora furia, ora grazia et ora eccellenza dell'arte: e non senza ragione, poiché questa parte é la piú difficile a conseguire che sia in tutta l'arte et anco la piú importante e piú necessaria da sapersi'.

the hidden sources of natural philosophy'.⁶³ Lomazzo further refers to Leonardo as the principal source of imitation concerning *moti* in that he created both artefacts that possessed motive power ('virtù motiva') – such as flying birds and a walking lion – and paintings, which still retained the spirit of motion and life. Lomazzo describes how Leonardo transferred the bodily and facial movements he had observed in men and women 'perfectly' from his mind to his works. Lomazzo called gestures and 'movements of the eyes [...] the spirits, in fact the soul, of painting', and 'motion' the 'spirit and life of art', thus linking, as Michael Cole has shown in several contributions, figural movement to animation, which Lomazzo alternately defined as 'fury, grace, and excellence of the art'.⁶⁴

Among the exemplary works concerning the art of motion, two, both located in Lombardy and both representing episodes from sacred history, are discussed in greater detail. Leonardo's *Last Supper* in the refectory of the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan is an obvious choice given its unique status as a source for the study of affects and emotions; Ferrari's Calvary Chapel at the Sacro Monte, however, is a choice that deserves further comment. According to Lomazzo, Gaudenzio Ferrari, 'although not well known', had reached the heights of excellence in that central part of art, and he particularly excelled in endowing 'saints and angels with suitable movements'. In the Monte Calvario Chapel at Varallo one sees 'admirable horses, and stupendous angels, not only painted, but also solid ones, that is to say made of clay in full relief by his own hand, most excellently, one figure after the other'. 65 While since Alberti horses had com-

⁶³ Lomazzo, "Trattato dell'arte", ed. Ciardi, vol. II, 100: '[...] ancora che sia parte tanto difficile e che solamente si può cavare da i riposti fonti della filosofia naturale'.

⁶⁴ Lomazzo, "Trattato dell'arte", ed. Ciardi, vol. II, 97: '[...] imperoché questi sono gli spiriti, anzi l'anima istessa, della pittura'. See also the citation in note 62, above. On Lomazzo and motion: Cole M., "Discernment and Animation, Leonardo to Lomazzo", in Falkenburg R. – Melion W.S. – Richardson T.S. (eds.), *Image and Imagination of the the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Proteus: Studies in Early Modern Identity Formation 1 (Brepols: 2007) 133–161, esp. 143–154. See also Cole M., "The Demonic Arts and the Origin of the Medium", *Art Bulletin* 84 (2002) 621–640.

⁶⁵ Lomazzo, "Trattato dell'arte", ed. Ciardi, vol. II, 101. The whole passage reads: 'Per dare moti a santi et ad angeli convenienti, (benché sia mal conosciuto) non fu secondo il mio vecchio precettore Gaudenzio, non solamente saggio pittore, come ho detto altrove, ma profondissimo filosofo e matematico. Veggansi, oltre ad altre infinite opere sue, tutte degne di lode, particolarmente in questa parte de' moti, diversi misterii della Passione di Cristo da lui dipinti, e massime quello dove Cristo è posto in Croce et è detto il monte Calvario al Sepolcro di Varallo, dove si veggono cavalli mirabili et angeli stupendi; non solamente dipinti, ma anco di plastica, cioè di terra, fatti di sua mano di tutto rilievo eccelentemente, a figura per figura; et oltre di ciò il volto della capella di Santa Corona nelle Grazie di Milano, dove si veggono angeli veramente in tutte le parti, e principalmente ne i moti, eccellenti, e la grandissima cuba di S. Maria di Serono, ripiena tutta di troni d'angeli,

monly been understood as a challenge to an artist's mastery of proportion and movement, 66 the focus on the 'movements of angels', on the other hand, reflects Lomazzo's more specific interests in all kinds of 'spirited' and animated things.⁶⁷ In addition to Ferrari's angels at Varallo, Lomazzo mentions two other vaults frescoed by Ferrari with singing angels and others making music in paradise: the Cappella della Sacra Corona in Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan and the Santuario della Madonna dei Miracoli at Saronno, the latter of which is described as 'crowded with angels, with motions and dresses of all imaginable kinds and with the strangest of the world's musical instruments in their hands'. The instruments held by angels also include some fantastical creations - Leonardo was also known for having designed new musical instruments – and some instruments (like the bagpipe and the hurdy-gurdy) considered to be unusual for angels' concerts.⁶⁸ According to Lomazzo 'the whole of Lombardy is adorned by works of this excellent man'. Lomazzo explicitly rebukes Vasari for having left out this 'great painter from the Lives of the Painters [...]: proof, to say nothing worse, that he was only interested in praising his own Tuscany to the skies'. Vasari does in fact mention Ferrari's 'highly esteemed works in Varese and Varallo', but dedicates only two or three lines to this artist at the end of the life of Pellegrino da Modena.⁶⁹ Lomazzo thus opposes Vasari's preference for Tuscan or Florentine art, offering instead Gaudenzio Ferrari's vernacular Lombard manner as an appropriate model

con moti et abiti di tutte le maniere che si possono imaginare e co' piú strani istromenti di musica in mano del mondo [...] Benché, in somma, tutta la Lombardia è adorna e piena delle opere di quest'uomo eccellente, di cui non voglio pretermettere un detto che, intorno all'arte de moti, aveva frequentemente in bocca: che ciascun pittore si diletta e compiace di furare l'invenzioni altrui, ma che gli è poi gran rischio di non essere scoperto e conosciuto ladro. Questo gran pittore, quantunque con ragione si possa paragonare, per prudenza, sapienza e valore a quelli che sono nominati nel terzo libro dell'architettura, nondimeno è stato tralasciato da Giorgio Vasari nelle Vite che'egli ha scritto de' pittori, scultori et architetti: argomento, per non apporgli piú brutta nota, ch'egli ha inteso solamente ad inalzare la sua Toscana sino al cielo'.

⁶⁶ Grassi L. – Pepe M., *Dizionario dei termini artistici* (Turin: 1994) 162: "Cavallo, Membri e proporzioni del" (Grassi).

⁶⁷ Cole M.W., "Harmonic Force in Cinquecento Painting", in Pfisterer U. – Zimmermann A. (eds.), *Animationen, Transgressionen: Das Kunstwerk als Lebewesen*, Hamburger Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte 4 (Berlin: 2005) 73–94.

⁶⁸ See *Gaudenzio Ferrari e la cupola del Santuario di Saronno: Il concerto degli angeli* (Milan: 2008), esp. 34–40 (Boccardi S., "Un concerto nel cielo di Saranno"), 41–48 (idem, "Schede degli strumenti").

⁶⁹ Vasari G., *Le Opere di Giorgio Vasari*, ed. G. Milanesi, 9 vols. (Florence: 1906), vol. IV, 653: 'Fu coetaneo di costui Gaudenzio Milanese, pittore eccellente, pratico ed espedito, il quale in fresco fece in Milano molte opere, e particularmente ai frati della Passione un Cenacolo bellissimo, che per la morte sua rimase imperfetto. Lavorò anco a olio eccellentemente; e di sua mano sono assai opere a Vercelli ed a Veralla, molto stimate'.

for the depiction of the most subtle graceful movements – those of angels and saints. At the same time he fashions Ferrari as a painter and sculptor who expands the visual vocabulary of his art to include tactile and auditory dimensions.

What Lomazzo meant by 'moti et abiti di tutte le maniere' becomes clear when one considers a passage in Lomazzo's other treatise, the *Idea del Tempio della Pittura* of 1590. In the chapter on 'colour' Ferrari is described as 'ornatissimo coloritore' who, by a special gift of nature, was 'marvellous' in rendering 'with grace all kinds of fabrics, sarsenet and other clothes of silk, cotton, and wool'; moreover, in the 'diverse cangianti, royal robes and especially in the folds and creases he imitated so accurately what is natural and true, bewildering and perplexing the viewer in a thousand ways, that it was hard to believe if one had not seen it'. 70 Transmitting both visual and tactile sensations, Lomazzo's descriptions of Ferrari's draperies again evoke the celestial realm. Flowing draperies of a courtly kind, especially silks in *cangianti* combinations – in which Ferrari excelled – were viewed as especially suitable for angels.71 Lomazzo himself asserts that the 'vestments of certain angels reflect no differently than the arc of Iris', and that this gives 'the greatest delight and pleasure that one can offer with colours to the beholders'. The 'delight' (dilettazione, diletto) and 'pleasure' (piacere) caused by 'Christian images' is also extensively treated in Gabriele Paleotti's Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane of 1582. While the two lower kinds of knowledge and delight, termed as sensual

To Lomazzo, "Idea", ed. Ciardi, vol. I, 285: 'Gaudenzio ha servito all'ornamento, e come che in tutte le cose universalmente sia stato ornatissimo coloritore, tutto ciò per special dono della natura è stato maraviglioso nel esprimere tutte le sorti di panni con grazia, così di velluto, di ormesino e d'altri drappi di seta, come di tela e di lana, con tanto disegno e furia, che niun altro è per poter mai agguagliarlo. E nei diversi cangianti, ne i panni reali e spezialmente nelle falde et invogli, ha imitato cosí felicemente il naturale et il vero, sfogiando e capricciando in mille modi, che chi non vede, difficilmente è per crederlo [...] Ha di più Gaudenzio avuto grandissima grazia nel far i cavalli, i cameli e gli altri animali, talmente che pare che fosse nato propriamente a questo e ne i capelli è stato leggiadrissimo'.

⁷¹ Gage J., Color and Meaning: Art, Science, and Symbolism (Berkeley – Los Angeles: 1999) 52; Hall M., Color and Meaning: Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting (Cambridge: 1992) 21.

⁷² Lomazzo, "Trattato dell'arte", ed. Ciardi, vol. II, 175: '[...] et ancora a certi angeli, i cui vesti si riflettono non altrimenti che l'arco d'Iride. Ora questo è il maggior diletto e piacere che con colori si possa porgere a i risguardanti'. For an excellent analysis of this passage and the role of *cangianti* in Cinquecento painting: Lingo S., *Federico Barocci: Allure and Devotion in Late Renaissance Painting* (New Haven – London: 2008) 192–196, here 195.

and intellectual, are available to all, spiritual delights can only be aroused by Christian images in those rare 'noble souls' able to see with the mind's 'purged eye' ('con occhio purgato').⁷³

Originating in spiritual insight or judgment Ferrari's works, according to Lomazzo, also affected the mind's eve. In the *Idea*, Lomazzo expands on the list of Ferrari's qualities and skills as a painter of subtle spiritual matters. Ferrari is here introduced as one of the seven 'governors of art', again for the way he conveys motion,⁷⁴ and is described as being inclined by nature to spiritual things. Lomazzo calls him a native of Valduggia, 'a painter, modeller, architect, optician, natural philosopher and poet' who played two stringed instruments, the lyre and the lute. In the chapter on 'the force and efficacy of movements' of the Trattato, Lomazzo likens a painter's 'moti al naturale ritratti' to the 'wonders' of the ancient musicians and the 'stupendous deeds' of producing automata able to move on their own.⁷⁵ Ferrari's statue in the 'temple of painting' described in the *Idea* honours the 'majesty, which he showed in divine matters and the mysteries of our faith most admirably'76 as well as in 'movements of religious majesty'.77 Ferrari's Monte Calvario Chapel is once more presented as a masterwork of the visual arts, as the 'via principale', in which Ferrari's 'diverse manners' are combined: painting, relief sculpture ('rilievo di plastica'), and architecture. The paragraph starts with what reads like a list of examples of artistic excellence displayed in his most renowned work: belts of various kinds, intricate diadems fashioned in an alluring and capricious manner, Moors, shepherds, children, old people, stones, caves, and rocks. His ingenuity extended to architectural ornament, the variety of foliage and the friezes of the columns. Ferrari was admirable in depicting God, male and female saints and especially in the expression of the 'divine air' ('aria divina') where he showed himself superior to

 $^{^{73}\,}$ Paleotti, "Discorso" 216–220 (book one, chapt. 22: "Della dilettazione che apportano le imagini Christiane").

⁷⁴ Grassi – Pepe, *Dizionario* 551: "Moto" (Mario Pepe).

⁷⁵ Lomazzo, "Trattato dell'arte", ed. Ciardi, 2: 95–96.

⁷⁶ Lomazzo, "Idea", ed. Ciardi, vol. I, 279–280: 'La statua del secondo governatore è fatta di stagno con cui si viene a significar in Gaudenzio Ferrari la maestà, la quale egli mirabilmente espresse nelle cose divine, e ne' misteri della fede nostra. Nacque costui in Valdugia, e fu pittore, plasticatore, architetto, ottico, filosofo naturale e poeta, sonator di lira e di liuto'.

⁷⁷ Lomazzo, "Idea", ed. Ciardi, vol. I, 283 ("Delle sette parti, o generi, del moto"): 'Il Ferrari ha dimostro i moti della maestà religiosa, della prudenza, della temperanza, della pietà, della giustizia, della grazia, della fede, dell'equità e della clemenza'.

many.⁷⁸ 'Aria', as David Summers has shown, could refer to specific qualities both of a person (or an image of a person) and of an artist's style. It was frequently used synonymously with *maniera* and *grazia* and viewed as a natural gift emanating from God's grace.⁷⁹ Gaudenzio's 'espressione in de l'aria divina' may thus denote both the 'divine bearing' of his figures of saints and the 'divine air' that his religious paintings breathed.

In both the *Trattato* and the *Idea* Gaudenzio Ferrari is presented as an artist and natural philosopher who was able to discern the hidden laws of harmony and movement and thus the subtle workings of the soul. These specific skills are extensively discussed in the chapter on the 'harmony and composition of our soul'. Only painting is able to represent that harmony, understood by Lomazzo as the correspondence between bodies, movements, and affects of harmonious souls. The 'governors who know to show [that harmony] in painting' are Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Ferrari who all came to the 'knowledge of harmonic proportion via music and the consideration of the fabric of our body'. Lomazzo counts the three among the greatest painters 'who were very sharp-eyed in penetrating (*acutissimi in penetrar*) that highest harmony, knowing that by that means they would consecrate their paintings to immortality'. Ferrari's insight into the 'composition of our soul' made him an expert in the art of movements

Tomazzo, "Idea", ed. Ciardi, vol I, 289: 'In Gaudenzio ella si vede bellissima, spezialmente nei cingari che ha dipinto in diversi modi, nelle diademe intricate con capriciosa e vaga maniera, nei mori, ne' pastori, nei ragazzi, nei vecchi, nei sassi, nelle spelonche, nelle rupi; et in Dio, ne' santi e nelle sante, che egli ha dipinto, si scorge maravigliosa, massime ne l'espressione in de l'aria divina, ove egli ha superato quanti mai furono inanzi a lui e son per essere doppo. Diverse maniere sono state ancor le sue, perché quella che ha tenuto nel sepolcro di Varallo è stata via principale, delicata e mirabile, e nel rilievo di plastica ancora, et inferiori poi sono tutte le altre tenute altrove. Onde chi non ha veduto quel sepolcro, non può dir di sapere che cosa sia pittura e qual sia la vera eccellenza di lei. Perché ivi si vede come si possano rappresentare vivamente gli affetti, vedendosi nelle faccie de gli angioli che piangono il dolore e la passione e nei fanciulli ridenti la festa et il giubilo, che la natura piú vivamente non gli dimostra. E si vede anco l'eccellenza dell'architettura attica [antica?] e la varietà sfoggiata de i fogliami e de i fregi delle colonne, nella quale egli è stato unico al mondo'.

⁷⁹ Summers D., *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (Princeton: 1981) 56–59; Grassi – Pepe, *Dizionario* 66–67: "Aria, Arie".

⁸⁰ Lomazzo, "Idea", ed. Ciardi, vol. I, 343 ("Dell'armonia e composizione dell'anima nostra, e de suoi governatori che la seppero mostrare in pittura"): '[...] furono acutissimi in penetrar questa altissima armonia, conoscendo che per mezzo di quella erano per consecrar le lor pitture all'immortalità. E però ciascuno di loro pose ogni suo studio et industria per comprender perfettamente questa armonica beltade e principalmente Leonardo, Michel Angelo e Gaudenzio; i quali pervennero alla cognizione della proporzione armonica per via della musica e con la considerazione della fabrica del corpo nostro [...]'.

of both the body and the soul, and especially of what may be called the 'spiritual touch' of a soul stirred by a good angel or by God.

Gaudenzio Ferrari's religious art ist thus understood as being analogous to 'celestial music' or that 'highest harmony', which, according to classical and early modern thought, related music to mathematics, a science in which Ferrari also excelled.81 According to Lomazzo, Ferrari introduced the previously 'unknown mode of showing figures of saints in the act of contemplating celestial things as well as the affects of a soul wholly turned toward the veneration of God'. To do so, he used an especially 'large and steady light'.82 Lomazzo must have been thinking of images of saints experiencing visions infused by God, a subject that became more fully developed toward the end of the sixteenth century.83 Published in the *Idea* of 1590, the passage is remarkable in that it has parallels in contemporary teachings on mystical prayer. In Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises, 'contemplation' ('contemplación') is associated with a kind of interior knowledge of the divine in which the interior senses and the sense of the imagination are fully engaged.⁸⁴ Ignatius experienced his own conversion and gift of discernment as the 'opening of the eyes of his understanding', which manifested itself in an 'elucidation so bright that all these things seemed new to him'.85 For Ignatius, discernment lay at the very core of the spiritual life and the fact that he himself had received that gift motivated him to communicate to others the 'rules' of how to discern good and bad spirits.

Michael Cole, in his essay on 'Discernment and Animation' has suggested that the novelty of Lomazzo's writings on art lies in his insistence

⁸¹ For the analogies between music and painting in the sixteenth-century literature on the arts see Lingo, *Barocci* 209–223.

⁸² Lomazzo, "Idea", ed. Ciardi, vol. I, 287 ("Delle sette parti, o generi, del lume"): 'Gaudenzio ha dato un lume largo e regolato, con che ha insegnato il modo, che prima non era conosciuto, d'esprimere nelle figure de i Santi la contemplazione delle cose celesti e l'affetto dell'animo tutto rivolto a riverire Dio'.

⁸³ Stoichiță V.I., Visionary Experience in the Golden Age of Spanish Art (London: 1985).

 $^{^{84}\,}$ Endean P., "The Ignatian Prayer of the Senses", The Heythrop Journal 31 (1990) 391–418.

⁸⁵ Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola et de Societatis Iesu initiis, ed. C. de Dalmases – D.F. Zapico, 4 vols. (Rome: 1943–1965), vol. I, 354–507, at 404 (30): 'Y estando allí sentado se le empeçaron abrir los ojos del entendimiento [...] y esto con una ilustración tan grande, que le parecían todas las cosas nuevas'. For an English translation, see *A Pilgrim's Journey: The Autobiography of Ignatius of Loyola*, ed. and trans. J.N. Tylenda, rev. ed. (San Francisco: 2010) 78–79 (30). See also O'Malley J.W., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: 1993) 41–43. For a discussion of this passage see the contribution by Walter S. Melion in this volume (80–83, and passim).

that an artist should also acquire theological and religious knowledge. Ferrari embodies an artistic persona deeply concerned with the spiritual world. It is known that Lomazzo originally intended to call the *Idea* 'libro della discrezione', and 'discrezione' remained a key term in this treatise.86 Lomazzo defines 'discernment' alternately as the 'universal doctrine' and the 'fundament and aim of art [...] concerning universally all its parts'.87 Discernment allows us to understand 'clearly and to the deepest depth what we do', and this understanding results in 'purity of intelligence, steadiness of judgment and, finally, the true and reasonable way to act'.88 Lomazzo is here transferring to the sphere of art a key concept in ascetic literature, which had gained new prominence in Jesuit thought. In Jesuit literature on mental prayer the ability of 'discretio spirituum' refers to the ability of the trained or gifted inner eye – Ignatius' 'vista de la imaginación' – to penetrate into the inner recesses of the mind, to separate and distinguish good spirits from evil ones. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises include several rules 'for the discernment of spirits' or 'for understanding to some extent the different movements of the soul and for recognizing those that are good in order to admit them, and those that are bad to reject them', thus providing the very means of distinguishing and recognizing phantasms or images produced by good and bad angels in our body to move the soul.89 In Lomazzo's writings, Gaudenzio Ferrari is said to possess 'sharpsightedness' or the gift of visual discernment, a quality that enabled him to see and express, by means of his art, the 'divine air' and the subtle movements of a saintly soul.90

⁸⁶ Klein R., "Les sept gouverneurs".

⁸⁷ Lomazzo, "Idea", ed. Ciardi, vol. I, 247, 254.

⁸⁸ Lomazzo, "Idea", ed. Ciardi, vol. I, 254: 'Imperoché per lei sola [la discrezione] possiamo conoscere fin dalle viscere chiaramente ciò che facciamo e da questa cognizione ne risulta poi la purità dell'ingegno e la stabilità del giudicio e finalmente la vera e ragionevol via di operare'.

⁸⁹ Ignatius de Loyola, Exercitia spiritualia, ed. I. Calveras – C. de Dalmases, Monumenta Ignatiana, ser. secunda: Exercitia Spiritualia S. Ignatii de Loyola et eorum Directoria 1 (Rome: 1969) 374–405 [313–336]. For an English translation see Ignatius of Loyola, The Spiritual Exercises, trans. L.J. Puhl (New York: 2000) 115–121 [313–336], at 115; Toner J.J., A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (St. Louis: 1982). See also the article "Discernment des esprits", Dictionnaire de Spiritualité 3 (1957) 1222–1291. On the highly contested nature of inner prayer and discernment: Sluhovsky M., "Believe Not Every Spirit": Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism (Chicago: 2007); Caravale G., L'orazione probita: Censura ecclesiastica e letteratura devozionale nella prima età moderna, Biblioteca della Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa; studi 17 (Florence: 2003); Malena A., L'eresia dei perfetti: Inquisizione romana ed esperienze mistiche nel Seicento italiano, Temi e testi 47 (Rome: 2003).

 $^{^{90}}$ The central significance of the concept of discernment for Lomazzo is emphasized by Cole, "Discernment and Animation".

Finally, Lomazzo frequently refers to Ferrari as a modeller or 'plasticatore', in other words as an expert specializing in what was then viewed as the oldest of the pictorial arts. In chapter six of the *Libro dei Sogni* of about 1563, a text that remained unpublished during Lomazzo's lifetime, Ferrari had already been introduced as a 'Milanese artist' who, at Varallo and in clay, 'did what many excellent artists did not do as evidenced by their works'. 91 The passage is part of a fictitious dialogue between the Greek sculptor Phidias and Leonardo da Vinci on sculpture, immediately before the discussion moves on to Michelangelo, the most accomplished of all sculptors. Ferrari's name is added to list of various sculptors and modellers taken from Vasari's life of the clay modeller Alfonso Lombardi (1497–1537) and other artists from Ferrara. 92 In the course of the dialogue, Phidias, in words taken from Pliny, also explains to Leonardo the commonly accepted difference between 'plastica' or 'fictoria' and 'statuaria'. While the latter was invented by men, the former was first performed by God who made man out of dust.93 The Trattato di Pittura, in the chapter on movement, explicitly mentions that the Calvary Chapel included both painted figures and 'figures made of clay in full relief by [Ferrari's] hand' ('anco di plastica, cioè di terra, fatti di sua mano di tutto rilievo'); the chapter on various motions during 'rest and exercise' includes several paragraphs on modelling, considered to be the sister of painting or the mother of sculpture by the ancients'. Lomazzo cites extensively from a book written by Leonardo 'at the request of Lodovico Sforza, duke of Milan', and which controversially argues that modelling is 'closer to the imagination' and thus a more noble art than sculpture, considered 'nothing else than a laborious imitation of modelling'.94

⁹¹ Lomazzo G.P., "Gli sogni e raggionamenti composti [...] con le figure de spiriti che gli raccontano da egli dessignate", in *Scritti sulle arti*, ed. Ciardi, vol. I, 157: 'Gaudenzio Milanese che a Varalli, di terra, ha fatto quello che molti eccellenti scultori fatto non hanno come il lor vero lo dimostra'.

⁹² Vasari, *Opere*, vol. V, 92–96. Companini G. – Sinigalliesi D., *Alfonso Lombardi: Lo scultore a Bologna*, Le falestre: Itinerari 5 (Bologna: 2007).

⁹³ Lomazzo, "Gli sogni", ed. Ciardi, vol. I, 119: 'E chi de piú bone opere dilla scoltura ne fu trovatore, fu un mortale, ma avanti lui e de tutti gli altri, gli fu Iddio, il quale fabricò l'uomo di luto, trovando in un momento la plastica, che noi chiamiamo fictoria, che fu da io giudicata, e da Prassitelle, madre dilla scoltura'. Cf. *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art* 180–181 (XXXV.156).

⁹⁴ Lomazzo, "Trattato di pittura", ed. Ciardi, vol. II, 138-140.

4. The Desert and the Garden of Eden: Galeazzo Alessi's Scenes of Temptation

Lomazzo's early appreciation of Ferrari's 'art of modelling' was shared by another Milanese, the patrician Giacomo d'Adda, captain of the cavalry under Francesco II Sforza.95 In about 1565, d'Adda commissioned Galeazzo Alessi, at that time the leading architect of both Genoa and Milan, to redesign and reorganize the once famous pilgrimage site at Varallo. D'Adda's interest in the religious site was motivated by his marriage to Francesca Scarognina from Valsesia, who belonged to a family that had supported the administrators of the fabric at the Sacro Monte of Varallo from an early stage. In 1566, shortly after Alessi had begun working on the project, Francesco Sesalli's Brief Description of the Sacro Monte of Valsesia ('Breve descrittione del Sacro Monte di Varallo di Valsesia') was published in Novara; the treatise was dedicated to Francesca Scarognina and made mention of her 'very worthy consort' who 'at no little expense' was now continuing construction at Varallo.96 Further mentioned are the various benefactors of the sacred site and the painted and sculpted 'works of a certain Ferrari of this country', described as 'so like nature as if nature and not art had made them'. The main part consists of a 'description' of the 'Sepulchre of Christ' and 'many other places which are similar to those in the Holy Land with very many statues and very beautiful paintings'. Sesalli's booklet went through at least fifteen editions up to 1600. The 1570 edition further includes some 'very beautiful prayers to be said' ('molto belle orationi da esser dette') when visiting the individual chapels and meditating upon the Passion of Christ. From about 1578, a summary of what still needed to be done at the site was added to the text ('un sommario di tutto quello che se li ha da fare'). In 1587, Pope Sixtus V considered the Sacro Monte of Varallo among the 'religious monuments of extraordinary antiquity' ('religiosa antiquitatis monumenta insignis') that 'excite the minds of the faithful to the fervour of devotion' ('mentes fidelium ad devotionis fervorem excitandum').97 The editions after 1587 also mention that on every day of the year in each of the chapels an indulgence of 100

⁹⁵ On the d'Adda family see Cagna Pagnone M.G. (ed.), *La famiglia d'Adda Salvaterra e la Valesia*, exh. cat., Comune di Varallo, Archivio di Stato Varallo (Borgosesia: 1986).

⁹⁶ Sesalli, *Breve Descrittione* (1566), fol. 2r. I cite from Durio, "Francesco Sesalli" 15–31, here 16.

 $^{^{97}}$ Constitutio Sixti V. Pon. Max. De administratione Sacri Montis Varalli [Rome, 30 May 1587] (Varallo, Petrus Revellus: 1587).

days could be gained for specific devotions and prayers. These later additions to the original text confirm the increasing attention and promotion the sacred landscape received.⁹⁸

But let us first consider the changes suggested by Alessi in his so-called Libro dei Misteri, which is generally dated between 1565 and 1569. At the wish of his patrician patron, Galeazzo Alessi also recorded the designs and descriptions of all the monuments that had been built or still needed to be built. 99 On the one hand, as the preface of the *Libro dei Misteri* suggests, Alessi's planned and partially constructed buildings were meant to enhance the aura of antiquity that surrounded the old monuments and artefacts dating from the foundation of the pilgrimage site. The Loreto Chapel, the Chapel of the Nativity and the Holy Sepulchre were left untouched since they had been constructed in conformity with the dimensions of the buildings in the Holy Land. Alessi retained Ferrari's old fountain with the figure of Christ 'from whose wounds water flows' and made it the centre of his architectural masterpiece, the *gran piazza*, surrounded by the palaces of Pilate and Caiaphas and the temple of Solomon. Alessi, in contrast to Sesalli, did not find all of Gaudenzio Ferrari's polychromed sculptures pleasing to the eye. 100 Like Sesalli, however, Alessi considered Ferrari's masterpiece, the Monte Calvario Chapel, to have been done 'very well and with judgement' ('è un misterio fatto molto bene et con giuditio'), and paid tribute to its emotional impact with a detailed ecphrasis of the scene. 101

As a whole, Alessi's project offers what I would like to call an architectural meditation on the possibilities and ambiguities of seeing and sight. In the preface, the following changes are suggested: 102 Firstly, Alessi

⁹⁸ For the guidebooks to the Sacro Monte di Varallo: Pomi D., "Le guide cinquecentesche del Sacro Monte", in De Filippis, *Gaudenzio Ferrari*, 115–120; Cometti M., "Le guide cinquecentesche e secentesche del Sacro Monte di Varallo", in Vaccaro – Riccardi, *Sacri Monti* 131–141.

⁹⁹ Stefani Perrone S., "L'urbanistica del Sacro Monte e l'Alessi", in *Galeazzo Alessi e l'architettura del Cinquecento* (Genoa: 1975) 501–516, 580–596, here 513, note 25 (on the dating of the *Libro dei Misteri*); eadem, "I 'Misterii' architettonici di Galeazzo Alessi al Sacro Monte di Varallo", in Alessi G., *Libro dei misteri: Progetto di pianificazione urbanistica, architettonica e figurativa del Sacro Monte di Varallo in Valsesia* (1565–1569), ed. A.M. Brizio – S. Stefani Perrone, 2 vols. (Bologna: 1974), vol. I, 11–55. See also Brisca M., "Galeazzo Alessi, urbanista a Genova, Milano e Varallo Sesia", *Bollettino storico per la provincia di Novara* 95 (2004) 643–664.

¹⁰⁰ For example, Alessi does not find the figures in the Nativity Chapel very pleasing: 'non mi aggradiscono molto le figure ch'ivi sono': Alessi, *Libro dei misteri*, vol. I, fol. 4r.

¹⁰¹ Alessi, *Libro dei misteri*, vol. I, fol. 6r-v.

 $^{^{102}}$ For an extensive discussion of Alessi's project, especially his designs for subterranean edifices of Limbo, Purgatory, and Hell, see: Göttler, *Last Things* 84–110.

recommended that the old, overgrown, and winding paths be replaced with a new road, to make sure that the visitors to the Sacro Monte saw the chapels in the right order. *Secondly*, he added two new chapels to the original complex: the Chapel of Adam and Eve at the entrance to the site, and the Chapel of the Last Judgment at its exit, thus linking the Passion of Christ to mankind's fall into perdition caused by the sin of tasting the forbidden fruit. Thirdly, Alessi designed an infernal landscape in a grotto at the foot of the Sacro Monte, which included three partially subterranean buildings representing Limbo, Purgatory, and Hell. In the preface, Alessi explicitly restricts the visit to these buildings to those visitors who are 'curious to see more', thus distinguishing men and women who are curious from the visitors to the chapels on the top and slopes of the hill who are referred to throughout as 'devout' ('devoti'). 103 These diverse viewing experiences are facilitated by specific architectural devices. While the 'devout', on the top of the mountain, look from the side into the interiors with historical biblical scenes, the 'curious', at the foot of the mountain, gaze into the otherworldly realms from above – through the eyes (oculi) of the domes of the subterranean buildings, which are covered with lanterns of tinted glass, according to the nature of each of these imaginary places. Alessi's drawing of the building of Purgatory, for example, shows men and women watching the suffering souls through two glass covers arranged one above the other and described in the adjacent comment as of a 'lively reddish colour' [Fig. 8]. Fourthly, Alessi introduced so-called 'vetriate' - ornamented windows, screens, or frames - that separated the viewer's spaces from the spaces occupied by Galeazzo's sculptures and decorations. In almost all cases, these are in the form of monumental glass covers, which are placed over the sculptural groups like giant lampshades. A prayer stool attached to the base further ensured that visitors would look at and contemplate the scenes from a kneeling position. Inside the round buildings, pilgrims are confined to the walkways, most of which are decorated with panoramic landscapes, which act as extensions of the 'real' landscape outside the chapels. The alpine landscape is thus likened to the historical natural surroundings through which Jesus once walked.

¹⁰³ Alessi, *Libro dei misteri*, vol. I, fol. 7r: 'Ben è vero che quelli i quali curiosi di veder più oltre, potranno ritornare di nuovo per la principal porta, et a lato a la cinsura del muro che si congionge a essa, calando ritrovare una porticella di color negro, per la qual si entrarà in una valle che oltre andando nel più basso fondo di essa, ivi potranno vedere in una grotta che passa le radici del monte il Limbo, il Purgatorio, et l'Inferno, che desidero che quivi in la medesima valle si dimostrino'.

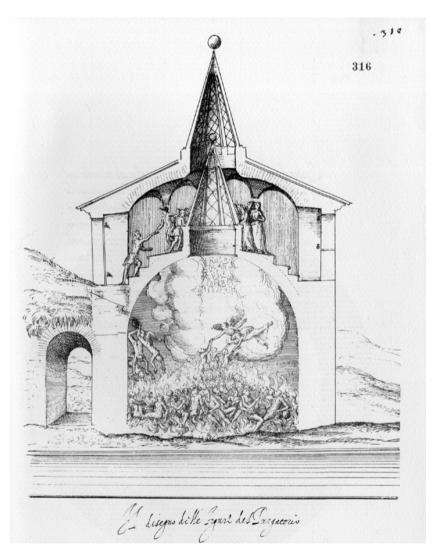


Fig. 8. Galeazzo Alessi, *Purgatory*. Pen-and-ink drawing, in *Libro dei misteri* (1565–1569), fol. 316r. Varallo, Biblioteca Civica. Reproduced with permission.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of Alessi's treatise is the distinction between two kinds of visitors or, rather, two kinds of disposition corresponding to two kinds of architecture. Written a few years after the conclusion of the Council of Trent, Alessi's distinction between the curious and devout responded to the suspicions of Tridentine theologians regarding anything that could arouse curiosity or curious speculations, but also subverted them. The decree on purgatory, issued on the second to last day before the final conclusion of the Council, while reaffirming the contested doctrine, urged bishops to ensure that lay people were not exposed to 'the more difficult and subtle questions [...] from which there is for the most part no increase of piety' and to forbid all elements that could cause scandal and arouse 'a certain kind of curiosity and superstition'. 104 Similarly, the Tridentine decree concerning sacred images, issued the same day, stated that 'all lasciviousness [shall be] avoided, so that images shall not be painted and adorned with a seductive charm'. 105 The Tridentine decrees were published at the printing press of Francesco Sesalli in Novara as early as 1564.¹⁰⁶ Expanding on that decree, Bishop Carlo Borromeo, in his Instructions for Church Building (Instructiones fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae) of 1577 urged bishops not to allow 'whatever is curious and does not incite men to piety'. 107 Alessi's architectural interventions in the chapels representing the mysteries of the infancy, ministry, and Passion of Christ facilitated a 'devout' viewing experience in accordance with the Tridentine decrees. Conversely, Alessi's round buildings of Limbo, Purgatory, and Hell situated in a grotto landscape which had to be accessed by a black door were meant to feed the curiosity of the visitors who were 'eager to see more'. The fact that they were never built suggests that the associations they evoked were too ambivalent to meet the approval of the religious authorities.

But temptation also lurked in the area dedicated to the devout visitors of the sacred site. Alessandro Morandotti has suggested that both the Chapel of Adam and Eve and the Chapel of the Temptation of Christ by the Devil were inspired by Milan's 'water plays and artificial wonders' – in

¹⁰⁴ Canons and Decress of the Council of Trent 217.

¹⁰⁵ Canons and Decress of the Council of Trent 220.

¹⁰⁶ Canones et decreta sacrosancti oecumenici et generalis Concilii Tridentini (Novara, apud Franciscum Sesallum: 1564).

¹⁰⁷ Borromeo C., *Instructiones fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae*, in Barocchi, *Trattati*, vol. III, 42–45. For literature on that passage see Göttler, *Last Things* 83.

other words, by secular marvels rather than sacred art.¹⁰⁸ The two buildings are located in relative proximity to each other, and both refer to 'eccentric' geographical regions associated with natural marvels and a great variety of animals and beasts. Originally known as the Chiesa Nera, the Chapel of the Temptation once housed a wooden sculpture of Christ carrying the cross and served as the main entrance to the pilgrimage site. In the early 1570s, the Chiesa Nera was divided to accommodate both the scene with Christ carrying the cross and the scene of the temptation. In 1599, the space was once more reorganized and restricted to the scene of the temptation alone. The same year, the Perugian painter Domenico Alfano was commissioned to fresco the chapel with 'animals [...] and plants, adorning it with landscapes and other alluring things according to the history and in a natural way'.¹⁰⁹

It is noteworthy that of all the chapels on the mountaintop at Varallo, Alessi chose the Chapel of the Temptation of Christ to illustrate the ways in which the 'vetriata' impacts on the habitus and the visual experience of the viewer. Already in the writings of St. Jerome, the desert landscape of the first Christian hermits was viewed as an ambivalent place, as both a refuge from the dangers of the world, and a place of temptation, into which, for example, Jesus was led by the Spirit (*Luke* 4:1–13).¹¹⁰ Alessi designed the Chapel of the Temptation as a domed rotunda containing the 'figures of our Lord and the Devil in human form, who is tempting him with his artifices' [Fig. 9].¹¹¹ A sketch of the side view of the 'vetriata' shows a man with head bared and hands folded in prayer, kneeling at the barred window, through which he can see Christ rejecting the Devil's inducements with the words 'vade, Sathanas' [Fig. 10].¹¹² In typological literature, the temptations of Christ are sometimes contrasted with the temptation

¹⁰⁸ Morandotti A., *Milano profana nell'età dei Borromeo* (Milan: 2005) 103. On the Chapel of the Temptation of Christ, see Galloni, *Sacro Monte di Varallo* 223–252, passim; Stefani Perrone, *Guida al Sacro Monte di Varallo* 46–48.

¹⁰⁹ Agreement between the fabric master and the painter Domenico Alfani, 27 April 1599 (Archivio di Stato di Novara): 'Che detti fabriceri danno et allegano al detto Alfano a depingere la capella della tentatione di Nostro Signore di detto Sacro Monte con li animali che vi si farà dentro et piante, adornandola de paesi et altre vaghezze conforme l'historia et al naturale'. I cite from Longo, "Un luogo sacro" 413 (Appendice).

¹¹⁰ Cox Miller P., "Jerome's Centaur: A Hyper-Icon of the Desert", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996) 209–233.

¹¹¹ Alessi, *Libro dei Misteri*, vol. I, fol. 54r; cf. ibid., fol. 5r: '[...] faccisi un'altro tempiotto, nel quale si scolpisca la figura di Nostro Signore et il demonio in forma humana che lo tenta con suoi artefitii, il quale con faccia severa paia che lo scacci, dicendo, vade sathanas'.

¹¹² Alessi, Libro dei Misteri, vol. I, fol. 58r; cf. ibid., fol. 5r.

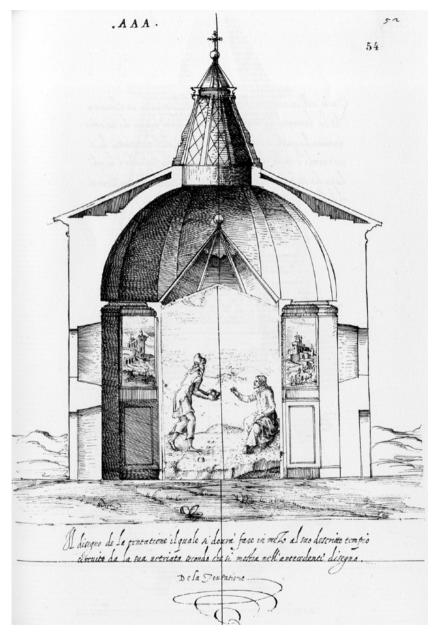


Fig. 9. Galeazzo Alessi, Interior of the Chapel of the Temptation of Christ. Pen-andink drawing, in Libro dei misteri (1565–1569), fol. 54r. Varallo, Biblioteca Civica. Reproduced with permission.

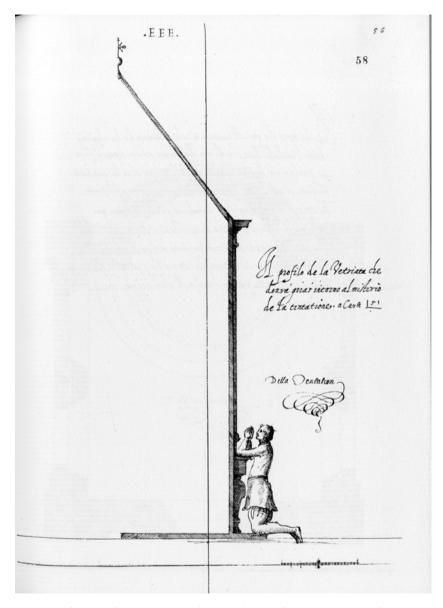


Fig. 10. Galeazzo Alessi, 'Vetriata' for the Chapel of the Temptation of Christ, in Libro dei misteri (1565–1569), fol. 58r. Varallo, Biblioteca Civica. Reproduced with permission.

of Eve: while Eve, overcome by her curiosity, succumbed to the serpent's suggestion that she should taste from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:6), Christ, by his supernatural power of discernment, drove the Devil away and was then ministered to by angels (*Matt.* 4:1–11).¹¹³ Alessi's beholder, by meditating upon Christ's rejection of Satan and temptation, exercises his own faculty of discernment and judgement, which was afforded a central place in the early modern anthropology of art. 114 In Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises, the 'Meditation on Two Standards' of the second week calls upon the practitioner to 'ask for a knowledge of the deceits of the rebel chief and help to guard [himself] against them' and consider how he tempts men and women with riches, honour, and pride. 115 In the 'rules for the discernment of spirits' developed for this second week the Devil is introduced as a cunning counterfeiter and dissembler who has the power to assume the appearance of an 'angel of light'. 116 Alessi's quickly drawn figure of a visitor and onlooker might also have served the artist for a meditation on the devilry of his own artistic devices, and of art's power to counterfeit.

Conversely, the Chapel of Adam and Eve makes visible the effects of concupiscence and desire, traditionally viewed as the major obstacles to discernment. Alessi was particularly keen to add the mysteries of the Fall and the Last Judgement to the original programme in order that the pilgrims might 'encounter the world's beginning at the entrance to the mountain [...] and its end at the exit'. The mystery of Adam and Eve further 'depicts the reason for and origin of everything that will be

 $^{^{113}}$ O.A. Nygren, "Versuchungen Jesu", Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie, 8 vols. (Rome: 1990), vol. IV, 449.

¹¹⁴ There is an ever-expanding newer literature on the topic: O'Leary J.S., L'art du jugement en théologie (Paris: 2011); Schlosser M., Die Gabe der Unterscheidung: Texte aus zwei Jahrtausenden (Würzburg: 2008); Sluhovsky, "Believe Not Every Spirit"; Roth C., Discretio spirituum: Kriterien geistlicher Unterscheidung bei Johannes Gerson, Studien zur systematischen und spirituellen Theologie 33 (Würzburg: 2001), esp. 339–378 ("Gerson und Ignatius von Loyola"); Boland P., The Concept of 'Discretio Spirituum' in John Gerson's "De Probatione Spirituum" and "De Distinctione Verarum Visionum A Falsis", The Catholic University of America, Studies in Sacred Theology (second series) 112 (Washington, DC: 1959).

¹¹⁵ Ignatius de Loyola, *Exercitia spiritualia* 242–4251 (136–148); Ignatius, *The Spiritual Exercises* 48–50 (136–148).

¹¹⁶ Ignatius de Loyola, *Exercitia spiritualia* 388–394 (328–336) at 390 (332); Ignatius, *The Spiritual Exercises* 119–121 (328–336) at 119 (332).

¹¹⁷ Alessi, *Libro dei Misteri*, vol. I, fol. 7r: 'Si entra poi in una valle, che hora si chiama di Giosafat, ne la quale giudico doversi dipingere il tremendo giuditio, accioche si come nell'entrata del Monte ritrovamo nel tempio di Adam et Eva, il principio del mondo, cosi nell'uscita di esso venghiamo a ritrorvar' il fine'.

shown afterwards'. 118 With the addition of the Chapel of Adam and Eve to the original programme, which focused on the life of Christ, Alessi altered the focus of the pilgrimage site to conform more closely to new forms of religious meditation in which the discerning eve of the mind plays a major role. This becomes particularly clear in the sketches in the *Libro*; the pages devoted to this chapel contain a ground plan, a view of the exterior, and a cross-section of the building. 119 Three sketches show the construction of the lantern above the dome. The cross-section of the building shows Adam and Eve on either side of the tree of knowledge of good and evil set in the middle of the chapel, around which is coiled a snake with a woman's head [Fig. 11]. ¹²⁰ More trees are lined up around the walls of the circular room, which were probably supposed to be executed in half relief, while traces of a paradise-like landscape can be made out on the walls of the chapel. Alessi's sketch proposes four window openings, through which viewers could follow how Eve, by giving in to ocular concupiscence and desire, 'precipitated all mankind into ruin'. 121 The window openings, which were provided with fine mesh, enabled pilgrims to observe the scene and thus also see the two naked figures from all sides.

The Chapel of Adam and Eve was already under construction at the time Alessi was writing his *Libro*.¹²² The 1566 edition of Sesalli's *Breve Descrittione* mentions 'a holy church now in construction' being built across the entrance in which 'the offence done to God with the apple by

¹¹⁸ Alessi, *Libro dei Misteri*, vol. I, fol. 4r: 'E tanto più mi piace ch'ivi si facci questo misterio, quanto ch'egli è stato causa, e origine di tutto quello che si dimostrarà appresso'.

¹¹⁹ On the Chapel of Adam and Eve: Galloni, Sacro Monte di Varallo 169–173, and passim; Gentile G., "La storia del Sacro Monte nei documenti: Note per una lettura della mostra", in Il Sacro Monte di Varallo: Mostra documentaria, exh. cat., Archivio di Stato Varallo, ed. M.G. Cagna Pagnone (Varallo: 1984) 77–93; Longo P.G., "Alle origini del Sacro Monte di Varallo: La proposta religiosa di Bernardino Caimi", Novarien 14 (1984) 19–98, here 108–109, 115–116; Longo, "Un luogo sacro" 376; Stefani Perrone S., Guida al Sacro Monte di Varallo (Turin: 1995) 34–36. See further Göttler C., "Der Sacro Monte von Varallo als Laboratorium der Emotionen: Das irdische Paradies, Adams Sünde, die Hölle und der Beginn der Passion", in Michel P. (ed.), Unmitte(i)lbarkeit: Gestaltungen und Lesbarkeit von Emotionen, Schriften zur Symbolforschung 15 (Zurich: 2005) 449–489; Morandotti, Milano profana nell'età dei Borromeo 100–105 ("Serragli e giardini di delizie").

¹²⁰ Alessi, *Libro dei Misteri*, vol. I, fol. 4r (Proemio): '[...] rende commodità grandissima all'ingresso di detto tempio, nel quale come principio del tutto, si dovrà fare la statua [sic] di Adam et Eva, sotto l'Arboro dove il Demonio avviticchiato in forma di serpente ingannevolmente, li precipitò nell'universale perditione, inducendoli a mangiare del vietato pomo [...]'.

¹²¹ Alessi, *Libro dei Misteri*, vol. I, fol. 4r (Proemio).

¹²² Alessi, *Libro dei Misteri*, vol. I, fol. 12v: 'La presente pianta segnata D. dimostra il disegno de la già posta in opera nel tempio dedicato à Adam et Eva'.

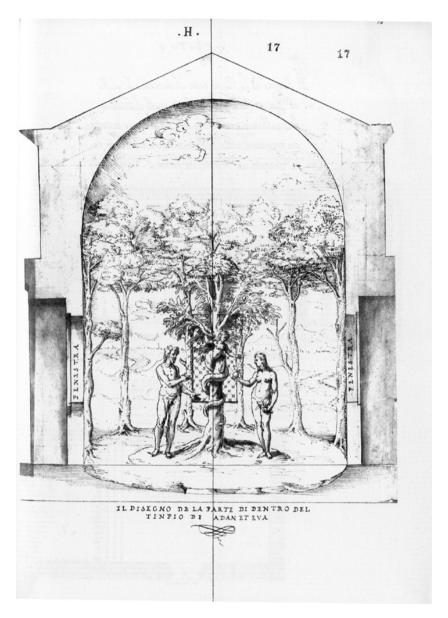


Fig. 11. Galeazzo Alessi, *Interior of the Chapel of Adam and Eve.* Pen-and-ink drawing, in *Libro dei misteri* (1565–1569), fol. 17r. Varallo, Biblioteca Civica. Reproduced with permission.

our disobedient first two parents will be depicted'. ¹²³ According to the 1570 edition of Sesalli's *Descrittione*, the scene was 'portrayed in sculpture'. ¹²⁴ A list of the mysteries to be found on the Monte drawn up in about 1573 further informs us that Adam and Eve, the tree, and the serpent were on view as sculptures in the 'marble temple'. ¹²⁵ Some ten years later, more work is documented for this chapel, and the name of Carlo Borromeo comes up for the first time. In an agreement concluded on 26 April 1583 between the site administrators and the Moietti brothers, the latter were contracted to paint the entire chapel and decorate it with stucco figures, 'in full and half relief and enhanced with gold, according to the story of the creation of the world, and [...] instructions from Cardinal Borromeo or one delegated by him'. The heavenly choirs were to be painted in the vaulting, and in the stucco-free areas of the walls there were to be 'trees, human figures and non-rational animals (*animali irrationali*)'. ¹²⁶

As has been documented by Pier Giorgio Longo, during his last visit to the Sacro Monte in 1584 Carlo Borromeo was himself revising and editing a manuscript on 'records and rules concerning spiritual exercises' ('ricordi e regole d'essercitii spirituali') with an emphasis on what he called 'punti di passione' ('meditations on the Passion'). From a letter Borromeo sent to Bologna on 20 October 1584 we know that he asked Bishop Paleotti for critical comments, two years after Paleotti had published his *Treatise on Sacred and Profane Images (Trattato sulle immagini sacre e profane)*. As also documented by Borromeo's correspondence in October 1584, the archbishop attempted to intervene in the decoration

¹²³ Sesalli, Breve Descrittione (1566), fol. 6r. I cite from Durio, "Francesco Sesalli" 21.

¹²⁴ Sesalli, Breve Descrittione (1570), fol. 6v. I cite from Durio, "Francesco Sesalli" 21.

¹²⁵ Ordine delli misterij, ca. 1573. I cite from Gentile G., "La storia del Sacro Monte nei documenti: Note per una lettura della mostra", in *Il Sacro Monte di Varallo: Mostra documentaria* 77–93, here 86: '[...] Adamo et Eva, l'arbore et il serpente di rilievo con il Dio Padre che par che dica: Adam ubi es?"

¹²⁶ I cite from Gentile, "Storia" 86; see further Longo, "Il Sacro Monte di Varallo nella seconda metà del XVI secolo" 41–140, here 73: 'Parte dell'historia della Creatione del Mondo: et il restante di detta historia si farà di rilievo in sul piano di stucco, con le figure già fatte, depinte et ornate, come sarà conveniente, alli quali si aggiongano arbori, et figure humane et de diversi animali irrationali, quanto sarà bisogno, acciò tutte le figure, tanto quelle fatte, quanto quelle s'havera da fare et finalmente il portico di detta cappella col suo piano, resti depinta et ornata di figure di stucco, rilievi, et mezzo rilievo e con oro compitamente, secondo l'Historia della creatione del mondo e secondo li venerà dettato da mons. Ill.mo e Rev.mo cardinale Borromeo o altro suo subrogato'.

¹²⁷ See for the following: Longo, "Il Sacro Monte di Varallo nella seconda metà del XVI secolo", here 85, 98, and passim.

of some of the mysteries that seemed to him 'very confusing'.¹²⁸ For this purpose he summoned several experts to the mountain, including Panigarola, whom I have already mentioned, the architect Pellegrino Tibaldi (1527–1596), and Ludovico Moneta (1521–1598), who was responsible for the care of church fabrics and ornaments,¹²⁹ as well as Ottaviano Abbiate Forero, archpriest in the Duomo of Milan.¹³⁰ In particular the first chapel representing the original sin raised Borromeo's suspicions about the danger of sense impressions entering through the eyes.

The young Giovanni Antonio d'Adda (1559-1603), the son of Alessi's patron Giacomo d'Adda, who had died in 1580, took Borromeo's worries to heart. Between 1583 and 1587, he wrote a long Discorso, also mentioning Cardinal Borromeo, in order to criticise the decoration by the Moietti brothers which was probably still in the process of being carried out.¹³¹ Giovanni Antonio expresses his concerns that while the beauty of the Garden of Eden will indeed give delight (diletto) to the eyes of the visitor, and fill his soul with astonishment and admiration (maraviglia et stupore), it will nevertheless also make him forget Adam's transgression, the very reason why Christ became man, the mystery presented in the following chapel. D'Adda demanded that the act of sin should be stressed to the pilgrims entering through the porta principale, by placing additional halfeaten apples in the hands of Adam and Eve.¹³² He also called for the gold to be removed, since gold was not in use in those early times, and for a naturalistic and lifelike snake to replace the serpent in human form. All that Giovanni Antonio d'Adda would accept were the animals that had

¹²⁸ Longo, "Il Sacro Monte di Varallo nella seconda metà del XVI secolo" 96–97: '[...] parendomi molto confuse i Misterii et essendovi bisogno di qualche altra avvertenza et stabilimento'.

 $^{^{129}\,}$ On Ludovico Moneta: DBI 75 (2011) 637–640 (Marzia Giuliani); De Boer, Conquest of the Soul 88.

¹³⁰ De Boer, Conquest of the Soul 295.

¹³¹ Discorso di Giovanni Antonio d'Adda alli Signori Fabriceri del Sacro Monte di Varallo intorno al mistero che s'ha da far nella capella intitolata d'Adamo et Eva (Archivio di Stato di Varallo Sesia, Archivio Sacro Monte, 115). In the following I cite from Longo, "Il Sacro Monte" 137–140.

¹³² Discorso di Giovanni Antonio d'Adda, in Longo, "Il Sacro Monte" 138: '[...] seben riguardevole et vaga sarebbe per render questa capella la creatione del mondo, che di rappresentarvi dentro s'era concluso, com'opra altresì dilettevole a gl'occhi, quant'è il pensiero di quella all'animo di maraviglia et stupore; nondimeno non questa sola mira dovremo haver di porger agl'occhi diletto, ma molto più d'appagar l'animo, che più s'appaga soventi di cose men ornate et men belle, ma più concordanti tra loro et fatte con più raggionevole cagione'.



Fig. 12. Chapel of Adam and Eve with sculptures by Jean Wespin (Giovanni Tabacchetti) (ca. 1597/1598). Varallo, Sacro Monte. Image © Studio Mariano Dallago.

not been mentioned in Scripture, since it could be presumed 'that this very sweet place was a home not only to serpents'.

The sculptures made by Tabachetti and his colleagues at the end of the sixteenth century represent the third major refurnishing of the chapel. The graceful figures of Adam and Eve stand on either side of a slim tree, near the top of which hang the forbidden fruits. But the charm of the chapel lies in its life-size animals, both exotic and native – an elephant, lion, rhinoceros, leopard, camel, ostrich, wild boar, deer, hare, and a cock and an owl are grouped together with sheep and goats in peaceful coexistence around the first man and woman. However, the chapel as it was actually built provides only a frontal view of the sculptures [Fig. 12]. The kneeling pilgrims look through the opening in the ornamented screen at the fatal moment caused by our first parents' 'curiosity', 'vain inquisitiveness' or 'appetite for knowing', triggered by the senses and especially by the 'lust of the eyes'. This moment, on the one hand, was the start of the path leading to the Last Judgment, and on the other triggered the mechanism

 $^{^{133}}$ Augustine, Confessions, ed. and trans. H. Chadwick (Oxford: 1991) 210–213 (X.xxxv [54-57]): on 'curiositas' as illicit knowledge.

of salvation. A box of alms attached to the prayer stool offered the possibility of atonement for the sins committed with the eyes.

Giovanni Antonio d'Adda's fear that the delight experienced by the eye might corrupt the soul was expressed in another of his writings, the *Meditationi sopra i Misterii del Sacro Monte di Varallo*, revised and expanded by his brother Francesco. According to the dedication dated 23 September 1602, the d'Adda brothers hoped through this work 'to hasten to the aid of the negligence of the many who (as they say) go to venerate the Sacro Monte, but in fact treat it as an amusement (*trastullo*) rather than visit it out of piety'; the meditations Giovanni Antonio recommends should give them 'an opportunity to turn their souls to something other than the paintings, the green of the trees, and similar things'. ¹³⁴ Called *Meditationi* – rather than *Descrittione* as the earlier guidebooks were – the booklet by the d'Adda brothers marks a beginning of a new kind of religious literature focusing on the cognitive-emotional processes that were triggered by the visit of the site. ¹³⁵

5. Conclusions: Zuccaro's 'Diverse Recreations'

Federico Zuccaro visited the Sacri Monti merely two years after the publication of the *Meditationi* by the d'Adda brothers, and it is to his description of Varallo, Crea, and Orta that we now turn in conclusion. While the d'Adda brothers, anxious to follow Carlo Borromeo's prescriptions, aimed to transform Varallo into a penitential landscape, Zuccaro described his visit as 'recreational', commenting both on the pleasurable

¹³⁴ Meditationi sopra i Misterii del Sacro Monte di Varallo di Valle di Sessia del signor Giovanni Antonio d'Adda, gentil'huomo milanese, nuovamente reviste et aggiuntevi alcune altre meditationi del signor Francesco suo fratello (Milan: 1605). I cite from: Gentile G., "Gli interventi di Carlo Bascapè nella regia del Sacro Monte di Varallo", in Carlo Bascapè: Sulle orme del Borromeo: coscienza e azione pastorale in un vescovo di fine Cinquecento (Novara: 1994) 69, note 37: '[...] soccorrere alla trascuraggine di molti, i quali andando (come dicono) alla devotione del Santo Monte di Varallo, più tosto per trastullo lo trascorrono, che per devotione lo visitano; e di porger occasione a questi tali di non perdervi i passi, con soggerirci materia d'applicar l'animo ad altro che alle pitture, alla verdura de gl'arbori e simili cose, con alcuni punti di meditatione [...]'.

¹³⁵ I elaborated on the topic in Göttler C., "Der Sacro Monte von Varallo" 469-472.

¹³⁶ The journey is documented in Zuccaro's last publication, *Il passaggio per Italia*, ed. Ruffino 14–20, at 14–15: '[...] il Signor Cardinale ci mandò a vedere il Monte di Varalo, due giornate di là da Milano verso Settentrione, luogo notabile e degno certo ch'io gliene dia un puoco ragguaglio'.

natural surroundings and the 'artifice' of the chapels and their interiors. As already mentioned, Zuccaro was traveling with Cesare Nebbia and at the suggestion of Federico Borromeo, whom the two artists had known since their years together at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome. Borromeo's own interest in 'solitary places' and 'places of contemplation' such as Varallo – to employ here Bascapè's wording of 1604 – went back to these early years in Rome. In a letter to his mother dated 26 May 1599, he described how he had 'been in a garden, almost outside Rome, solitary and almost a hermit'. He expressed his wish 'to do this frequently in this present month, and also in the following ones, because [...] it cheers up the spirit'. 137 It was during his stay in Rome in the 1590s that Borromeo, then in his early thirties, began to acquire paintings from northern artists, first from Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625), then from Paul Bril (1554-1626), showing hermits in a wilderness away from the world and its affairs.¹³⁸ Borromeo's interest in pictures of hermits' dwellings was kindled by a series of engravings by Jan and Raphael Sadeler after the Antwerp painter Maarten de Vos (1532–1603), entitled Solitudo, sive vitae patrum eremicolarum (Solitude, or the Lives of the Desert Fathers), which Borromeo also owned. 139 Drawing upon older visual and literary models,

¹³⁷ Marcora C. (ed.), *Lettere del cardinale Federico Borromeo ai familiari, 1579–1599, 2* vols. (Milan: 1971), vol. I, 310–311, no. 146: 'Io hoggi me ne son stato ad un giardino, quasi fuor di Roma, solitario et mezzo heremita. Questo io lo voglio fare spesso, fra il mese presente, et anco nei seguenti, perché così si attende a qualche cosa necessaria da farsi et anco si ralegra l'animo'. I cite from Jones P., "Federico Borromeo as a Patron of Landscapes and Still Lifes: Christian Optimism in Italy ca. 1600", *Art Bulletin 7*0 (1988) 261–272, at 262.

¹³⁸ The landscapes with hermits by Jan Brueghel the Elder in Federico Borromeo's collection are all dated 1596 or 1597. See Jones, Federico Borromeo and the Ambrosiana, "Catalogue IA: Paintings", cat. 29a-25 (Landscape with a Hermit Reading and Ruins, signed and dated 1596, fig. 33); 29f-30 (Landscape with a Hermit Praying); 30c-17 (Landscape with a Hermit Praying Before an Altar with a Statue of the Virgin, signed and dated 1595, fig. 49); 30d-18 (Mountain Landscape with a Hermit Praying, signed and dated 1597, fig. 34). The landscapes with hermits by Paul Bril date from between 1605 and 1610. For a discussion of these works, see: Jones, Federico Borromeo and the Ambrosiana 78–79, 130–135; eadem, "Federico Borromeo as a Patron of Landscapes" 263–268; eadem, "Two Newly-Discovered Hermit Landscapes by Paul Bril", The Burlington Magazine 130 (1988) 32–34.

of the hermit series by the Sadeler brothers, entitled *Sylvae sacrae monumenta sanctioris philosophiae quam severa anachoretarum disciplina vitae et religio docuit*, published in Munich in 1594 and dedicated to Wilhelm V. See *Maarten de Vos*, comp. C. Schuckman, ed. D. de Hoop Scheffer, 3 vols., Hollstein's Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450–1750, 44–46 (Rotterdam: 1995–1996), vol. I, 203–206; plates, part II, 68–72, plates 964–993 (*Solitudo*); vol. I, 206–208; plates, part II, 73–82, plates 994–1049 (*Sylvae sacrae*). For a discussion of earlier traditions of 'desert piety', see Prosperetti L., *Landscape and Philosophy in the Art of Jan Brueghel the Elder* (1568–1625) (Farnham: 2009) 39–40.



Fig. 13. Jan Brueghel the Elder, Landscape with a Hermit Reading and Ruins (1596). Oil on copper, 25×35 cm. Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan (Inv. 75/A). Image © Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana.

this first hermit series by the Sadeler brothers, generally dated around 1585, both responded and contributed to a growing interest in early forms of religious solitude and withdrawal, shared by various members of the European religious élite. Jan Brueghel, in his 1596 *Landscape with Ruins* in the Ambrosiana, cited the figure of the reading hermit from the Sadelers' composition of the *Temptations of St. Anthony*, while transforming the threatening surroundings into a paradisiacal wilderness, above which a bird of paradise flies toward the sun [Fig. 13]. The painting may have served as an aid to its learned viewer of how to construct, through reading and meditation, a paradise within oneself.

As has been argued earlier in this essay, the publication of Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* in 1548 led to a marked interest in what was then alternately called 'mental prayer', 'colloguy within oneself', or 'celestial

¹⁴⁰ See Jones, *Federico Borromeo and the Ambrosiana*, "Catalogue IA: Paintings", cat. 29a-25 (Landscape with a Hermit Reading and Ruins, signed and dated 1596, fig. 33); Ertz K., *Jan Breughel der Ältere* (1568–1625): *Die Gemälde mit kritischem Oeuvrekatalog* (Cologne: 1979) 562, cat. 30.

eloquence'. In the introduction to the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius reminds the practitioner of mental prayer that 'the progress made in the exercises will be greater the more the exercitant withdraws from all friends and acquaintances, and from all worldly care'. As a result of this 'solitude and seclusion', the soul would become more disposed 'to be united with its Creator and Lord' and 'to receive graces and gifts from the infinite goodness of its God'. 141 This 'creative isolation from everyday life', as Niklaus Largier has called it, 142 was virtually conflated with the desert or wilderness (eremus) into which the early Christian anchorites withdrew to converse exclusively with God. Here again, the Jesuits adapted earlier monastic and humanist traditions, and disseminated them at a broader social and cultural level. The German mystic Henry Suso (d. 1366), for example, decorated his cell, into which he withdrew for more than ten years, with images of anchorites, thus transforming the place of solitary prayer into a second Thebaid, taking place in the here and now. 143 In 1395, the Florentine notary Lapo Mazzei wrote to a friend, that 'alone at home, in bed and in my study', he would experience the same 'happiness as the good hermits do on the mountain', thus comparing the privacy of his own study with the anachoretic seclusion and solitude of earlier times. 144 Post-Tridentine culture returned to and expanded the imagery of sacred solitude and reclusion. Of particular interest in our context is Francis de Sales' widely disseminated treatise *Introduction to the Devout Life* of 1609. Francis de Sales (1567–1622), then bishop of Geneva at Annecy and closely connected to the Savoy court, advises his female addressee about how to create a solitary space within herself without retreating into the desert. He recommends that she 'build a little oratory within her soul where she could retire mentally'; among the 'excellent places of retreat or hermitages where we may imitate the solitude of our Saviour', he mentions the 'wilderness' of Mount Calvary; the 'desolate stable' and 'ruined building' of the Nativity; and the heaven of the Ascension.145

It was within the context of this revived interest in religious retreats and private colloquies with God that the Sacro Monte of Varallo became

¹⁴¹ Ignatius, The Spiritual Exercises 11 [20] ("Introductory Observations").

¹⁴² Largier N., "Praying by Numbers: An Essay on Medieval Aesthetics", *Representations* 104 (2008) 73–91, at 79.

¹⁴³ Hamburger J., The Rothschild Canticles: Art and Mysticism in Flanders and the Rhineland circa 1300 (New Haven – London: 1990) 151–152.

¹⁴⁴ I cite from Thornton D., *The Scholar in His Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven – London: 1997) 11, 182, note 42: 'Io mi sto solo in casa nel letto, e nello studio in quella letizia che stavano i romiti buoni nel monte'.

De Sales, Introduction 87 (II.12: "Spiritual Retreat"), 178 (III.24: "Society and Solitude").

important again. In Il Passaggio, Zuccaro describes Varallo as a locus amoenus and earthly paradise, removed from urban life, but at the same time freed from the hardship of spiritual and physical battle. Through its covering of trees and greenery, the 'Monte di Varallo', as Zuccaro calls it, was distinct from the high, barren mountains that separate Italy from the Swiss and other tramontani and surrounded Varallo to the west and north. A torrent or river called La Sesia passes through the pretty village at its foot, cascading rapidly from the mountains and then meandering more quietly southwards, watering and refreshing a beautiful and fertile country. Zuccaro calls Varallo's Monte a 'delight in itself' ('delizia per se stesso'), emphasizing the 'artifice of the many chapels' ('artificio di molte Capelle') that can be found there. These are reached by skilfully crafted stone stairs with more than 300 steps that 'at first sight seem to lead to paradise, as it were Jacob's Ladder'. 146 The site is enclosed by a wall, within that wall and spread over the summit of the mountain are about forty chapels, most of them within a stone's throw of each other. In each of these chapels, 'a mystery of the life, Passion, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ is represented, in imitation of the Holy Land, and with singular devotion (di singular devozione); for one can see represented from life (rappresentate al vivo) all the figures and mysteries in full terracotta relief and painted, so that they seem alive and true to life (vive, et vere paiono)'.147

Before travelling to Varallo, however, Zuccaro went to see the newer sanctuary at Crea, dedicated to the mysteries of the Virgin rather than to those of our Lord. From his description there remains little doubt that he preferred Crea over Varallo. He expects the site, once finished, to be much more beautiful, and more ordered than Varallo. Furthermore, 'all the figures are of a rather good hand', commissioned 'out of devotion by various princes and lords'. While, as observed by Zuccaro, the sanctuaries at Crea and Orta were constructed 'in imitation [of] and rivalry' with the Sacro Monte in Varallo, the newer Sacri Monti also drew from local anchoritic histories and traditions. 49 Work at Crea began in 1589 at

¹⁴⁶ Zuccari, *Il passaggio*, ed. Ruffino 15.

¹⁴⁷ Zuccari, *Il passaggio*, ed. Ruffino 16: 'D'intorno poi per tutta la sommità del Monte, riserrate, vi sono da quaranta capelle lontane l'una dall'altra un tiro di pietra e più e meno, et in ciascuna di dette capelle è rappresentato un misterio della Vita, Passione e Morte del Nostro Signor Giesù Cristo, ad imitazione di Terrasanta, di singular devozione per vedersi in esse rappresentate al vivo tutte le figure e misterii di rilievo di terra cotta colorite, che vive e vere paiono'.

¹⁴⁸ Zuccari, *Il passaggio*, ed. Ruffino 17.

¹⁴⁹ That early modern artefacts – independent of their date of production – could also refer to and substitute for earlier artworks is argued by Wood C.S., *Forgery, Replica, Fiction:*

the initiative of the Lateran canon regular Costantino Massino, prior of the Marian sanctuary Madonna del Monte. In his treatise of 1590, dedicated to Vincenzo Gonzaga (1562–1612), who became Duke of Mantua and Monferrat that same year, Massino explicitly mentions the 'antichissima divotione' at the Sacro Monte of Crea 'where God upon the intercession of the blessed Virgin continues to work miracles'. ¹⁵⁰ The spiritual centre of the Sacro Monte at Crea was a small oratory, according to tradition founded by Bishop Eusebius of Vercelli (ca. 283-371) as a refuge from the persecution of the Arians, and furnished with a miraculous image of the Virgin allegedly painted by St. Luke. A more expanded programme for the pilgrimage site was developed at the turn of the seventeenth century, which included 40 chapels with scenes from the life of the Virgin and 17 'romitorii' or hermitages dedicated to male and female hermit saints.¹⁵¹ Orta, which was mentioned but perhaps not visited by Zuccaro, was promoted by the powerful Vallombrosan abbot Amico Canobio (1530/32-1592) and officially founded in 1590.¹⁵² Administered by Capuchin friars it came, like Varallo, under the authority of Bishop Bascapè in 1593. The wooded area surrounding the old church of San Nicolao with its miraculous cult image had long been known as a 'sacro bosco'. The individual chapels illustrated the life of St. Francis – a saint who regularly retreated into the wilderness to converse with God alone. Like the early anchorite fathers he suffered severe tribulations from the Devil during these retreats.¹⁵³ Dedicated to

Temporalities of German Renaissance Art (Chicago: 2008) 15–24 ('Strange temporalities of the artifact'). See also Nagel A. – Wood C.S., "A New Model of Renaissance Anachronism", Art Bulletin 87 (2005) 403–432; Nagel – Wood, Anachronic Renaissance.

¹⁵⁰ Massino Costantino, Trattato dell'antichissima divotione nel Sacro Monte di Crea posto nel Ducato di Monferrato dove Iddio ad intercessione della Beata Vergine opera continuamente molti miracoli (Pavia, Girolamo Bartoli: 1590). For Crea: Gentile G., "I misteri mariani del Sacro Monte di Crea: 'Quasi historiati libri'", in Tuniz, Sacri Monti 165–177; Zanzi – Zanzi, Sacri Monti 83; Barbero A. – Spantigati C., Sacro Monte di Crea (Alessandria: 1998).

¹⁵¹ Cultella da Livorno Michelangelo, Breve historia, et descrittione della miracolosa Madonna del Sacro Monte di Crea in Monferrato con l'aggionta di alcune capelle et altre opera fatte di nuovo (Vercelli, Fratelli di Marta: 1612).

¹⁵² Paoli G. de, "Amico Canobio, protagonista della Novara del '500: Potere economico e politico di una famiglia novarese", *Novarien* 17 (1987) 5–44. The inventory of Amico Canobio's library is published by Dahnk-Baroffio E., "Biblioteche religiose novaresi verso il 1600 nel censimento della Congregazione dell'Indice, II, La biblioteca del monastero benedittino vallombrosiano di San Bartolomeo", *Novarien* 22 (1992) 245–273, at 271–273.

¹⁵³ See, for example, the episode that occurred during St. Francis's 50-day retreat in a 'little cell' that St. Clare made for him 'out of reeds and straw' near San Damiano, mentioned in the *Fioretti*, chapter 19: Habig M.A. (ed.), *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies*, English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: 1973) 1343. For the increasing interest in hermit saints in sixteenth-century Venice, see

the Virgin and St. Francis as the second Christ, the Sacri Monti at Crea and Orta offered their visitors an 'artificial wilderness' for the purpose of meditation on God's creation and the history of salvation, the latter illustrated through the chapels' lifelike and life-size decorations.

In the course of the sixteenth century, as I hope to have shown, the pilgrimage site at Varallo was shaped by different and often conflicting interests and ambitions; the visit to the chapels served – alternatively and often simultaneously – both mundane and spiritual recreations. Drawing on the writings of some of the most influential tracts on religious art, the Sacro Monte at Varallo, from the 1580s onwards, offered a site of 'solitude' for both aristocrats and townspeople to perform private prayer and meditation. Starting with Alessi's reorganization of the pilgrimage site in the 1560s - in the very first years after the conclusion of the Council of Trent - growing attention was given to directing and controlling the bodies, minds, and eyes of the pilgrims, the latter being the cause of much anxiety and concern. Set up in complex architectures that fit into their natural surroundings, the life-like images would unfold their tripartite functions to delight, instruct, and affect their viewers, as discussed in the religious literature on the arts at the time. As a solitary place in an Alpine region Varallo was primarily meant to offer what was then called 'recreation of the soul' (ricreazione dell'animo) or 'spiritual delight' (dilettazione spirituale) achieved through contemplation or viewing with an inner 'purged' eye. However, as evidenced by the contested debates around the decorations of the Chapel of Adam and Eve or the Garden of Eden, spiritual, sensual, and intellectual delights (in the sense of maraviglia and stupore) often combined; fears persisted that the paradise, constructed in one's soul during meditation and contemplation, 154 would turn into a place of temptation. While Galeazzo Alessi's subterranean buildings of Limbo, Purgatory, and Hell may be considered as architectural meditations on the theme of ocular temptations and delights, the changes and additions undertaken at Varallo after 1580 clearly aimed at banning temptation from the pilgrimage site, an attempt that of course ultimately also failed. Lomazzo's contribution to the history of the Sacro Monte, developed in the same years, has been mostly overlooked in scholarly literature. Lomazzo fashioned Gaudenzio Ferrari as a consummate

Janson A.F., "The Meaning of the Landscape in Bellini's 'St. Francis in Ecstasy'", *Artibus et Historiae* 15 (1994) 41–54.

¹⁵⁴ Casoni "Ragionamenti interni". See note 4, above.

religious artist who, through his deep knowledge of both nature and the human soul and from the rich traditions of Lombard art, created artworks that brought sensual, intellectual, and spiritual delights, and thus also critically responded Vasari's concepts and ideas.

Federico Zuccaro and Carlo Borromeo, separated in age by a mere four years, but visiting Varallo at different times and for different purposes, embody, so to speak, the whole range of meanings then ascribed to these new religious sites. Zuccaro must have been familiar with Lomazzo's discussions of Gaudenzio Ferrari's art and, especially, his 'unsurpassable masterwork', the Calvary Chapel at Varallo. The Accademia di San Luca in Rome provided an early platform to discuss Lomazzo's ideas. Zuccaro himself referred to Lomazzo's definition of painting at the very beginning of the Trattato dell'Arte in a lecture delivered at the Academy in January of 1594; the passage especially stresses painting's ability to represent movement and 'visibly demonstrate to our eyes many affects and passions of the soul'. 155 In Il Passaggio, Zuccaro presents Ferrari, curiously, as a painter from Milan and a 'student of Raphael of Urbino', describing him as an artist 'of spirited genius' ('di spiritoso ingegno') who worked in a 'vigorous, lively manner' ('maniera gagliarda'). Associated with a quick, alert, 'spirited' artistic temperament, the epithet 'gagliardo' was often used to indicate the expressive force of colour and movement, qualities in which Ferrari excelled, according to his early biographers – especially Lomazzo.¹⁵⁶ In the Monte Calvario Chapel, Ferrari 'made, by his own hands, a large number of figures in full relief as well as paintings in fresco

¹⁵⁵ Alberti R. – Zuccaro F., "Origine e progresso dell'Accademia del Disegno di Roma" [Pavia: 1604], in Heikamp, Scritti d'Arte di Federico Zuccaro 1–99, at 36: 'Giovan Paulo Lomazzo facendo grosso volume di questa professione, diffinisce la Pittura in questa maniera. Pittura e arte, la quale con linie proportionate, & con colori simili alla natura delle cose, seguitando il lume prospettivo immita tal volta la natura delle cose incorporee, che non solo rapresenta nel piano la grossezza el [sic] rilievo de'corpi, ma anco il moto e visibilmente dimostra à gl'occhi nostri molti affetti, & passioni del animo'. The passage is also cited by Jones, Federico Borromeo 115. See Lomazzo, "Trattato dell'arte", ed. Ciardi, vol. II, 26: 'Pittura è arte la quale con linee proporzionate e con colori simili a la natura de le cose, seguitando il lume perspettivo, imita talmente la natura de le cose corporee, che non solo rappresenta nel piano la grossezza et il relievo de' corpi, ma anco il moto, e visibilmente dimostra a gl'occhi nostri molti affetti e passioni de l'animo'.

¹⁵⁶ See Grassi – Pepe, *Dizionario* 347: 'Gagliardia' (Luigi Grassi); Battaglia, *Grande Dizionario della lingua italiana*, vol. VI, 529–530, esp. 532 (no. 15). In the *Introduction to Painting*, which prefaces the *Lives*, Vasari advices the painter to form the figures in the foreground of the composition 'with movement and vigour' ('con movenza e con gagliarda'): Vasari, *Opere*, vol. I, 173 ("Della Pittura", chap. 1). See also Suthor N., *Bravura: Virtuosität und Mutwilligkeit in der Malerei der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich: 2010) 60–66.

on the wall, which are pleasing and full of grace and accompany the story with vistas and landscapes'. Zuccaro points out the wretched gestures of the two villains who cast lots for the clothes of Jesus; he also asserts that in his view there is no sculptor who 'could have better expressed the pain and affliction of the mother and the grief and compassion of the Maries supporting her'. ¹⁵⁷

However, Zuccaro also seemed somewhat ambivalent about what he calls the 'pietoso modo' of some of the newer sculptural decorations. He observed that certain decorations had a special appeal for women, such as the Chapel of the Flagellation and the Chapel of the Massacre of the Innocents, the latter financed by Carlo Emanuele, Duke of Savoy and his wife Catherine, Infanta of Spain, the dedicatees of Lomazzo's *Trattato della Pittura* [Fig. 14].¹⁵⁸ The lifelike quality and emotional power of the sculptures made women cry.¹⁵⁹ Conversely, the Hell portrayed at the foot of the newer Sacro Monte at Crea was described by Zuccaro as 'so frightening that women and children would not dare to approach it'.¹⁶⁰ Zuccaro's judgment about the 'modo pietoso' continues a long tradition of prejudice against devout art that especially appeals to women and children.¹⁶¹ The implication in these passages that the demands of devotion and aesthetic delight are mutually exclusive and incompatible was to underlie the experience of lifelike and 'naturalistic' religious art up to our own time.

¹⁵⁷ Zuccari, *Il passaggio*, ed. Ruffino 18–19: 'Questo Gaudenzio fu di spiritoso ingegno e di maniera gagliarda, in questa Capella del Calvario ha fatto gran parte delle figure di rilievo di sua mano, e le pitture tutte a fresco nel muro graziose e belle, che accompagnano l'istoria di lontananze e paesi; fra queste figure di rilievo di mano sua sono quei manigoldi che giuocano a dadi su la veste del Signore, che fanno gesti et atti degni di quei sciagurati; vi è appresso un gruppo di figure della Madonna Santissima addolorata, che camina verso la croce aiutata dalle Marie, e San Giovanni appresso, che non so qual scultore de' megliori meglio l'avesse fatto, e meglio espresso il dolore e l'afflizzione della Madre, la compassione e lamento delle Marie che sostentano la Vergine, che ne va con le braccia aperte per abbracciar la Croce alzando la testa a mirare il figliuolo in Croce, ove si scorge l'estremo dolore ch'ebbe la Vergine in tal vista'.

¹⁵⁸ Testori G., "La Čappella della Strage: Il dialetto 'strangosciato' del Paracca", in idem, *Le realtà della pittura* (Milan: 1995) 194–195.

¹⁵⁹ Zuccari, *Il passaggio*, ed. Ruffino 19.

¹⁶⁰ Zuccari, *Il passaggio*, ed. Ruffino 17.

¹⁶¹ The most famous passage is Michelangelo's remark about Flemish pictures that make women cry, according to Francisco de Hollanda made in a conversation with Vittoria Colonna: Hollanda F., *Vier Gespräche über die Malerei geführt zu Rom 1538*, ed. and trans. Joaquim de Vasconcellos, Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte und Kunsttechnik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit 9 (Vienna: 1899) 28–29 (fol. 104r–v). On the complex meaning of this pasage, see Elkins J., *Pictures and Tears: A History of People who Have Cried in Front of Pantings* (New York: 2004) 160–161.



Fig. 14. Chapel of the Massacre of the Innocents with sculptures by Michele Prestinari, Jean Wespin (Giovanni Tabacchetti), Giovanni D'Enrico, and others (1587). Varallo, Sacro Monte. Image © Studio Paolo Zanzi, Varese.

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PART SIX SENSES, SCIENCE, AND THE SACRED

VISION, MEDICINE, AND MAGIC: BEWITCHMENT AND LOVESICKNESS IN JACQUES GREVIN'S DEUX LIVRES DES VENINS (1568)

Yvonne Petry

In the introduction to his French translation of Johan Wier's controversial book De praestigiis daemonum (On the Illusions of Demons), the physician Jacques Grévin recalls a conversation he had with Monsieur Milet, physician to the duke of Anjou. Milet told Grévin that the duke had solicited his opinion on the question of sorcery and, based on Milet's comments, he had concluded that there were a wide variety of opinions on the topic.² On this point, Grévin adds that sorcery and enchantments are 'matters which are certainly not well understood, in spite of the noise that they generate, not only among the vulgar people, but also among those who consider themselves more learned and better informed'.3 While such a statement is perhaps obvious to any historian of the early modern era, it is still noteworthy, insofar as it was made in the context of a conversation between two royal physicians. By the 1560s, witch trials were increasing in number and intensity. The Malleus maleficarum (Hammer of Witches) had by then informed several generations of witch hunters about the nature of witches and how to identify them. This decade, which saw the outbreak of the religious wars and the first major possession case in France, would see the beginning of a century of extensive intellectual and religious writing

¹ This was Henri of Valois, the future king, Henri III. Grévin does not specify which member of the Milet (or Millet) family, but this was most probably Louis Millet, who served with his father Guillaume as physician to the royal family. Guillaume died in 1563. See Le Paulmier C.-S., *Ambroise Paré*, d'après de nouveaux documents découverts aux archives nationales et des papiers de famille (Paris: 1887) 152, 190, 215.

² Grévin Jacques (trans.), Cinq livres de l'imposture et tromperie des diables, des enchantements & sorcelleries, prise du Latin de Iean Wier, medecin du Duc de Cleves, & faites françois par Iacques Grévin de Clermon en Beauvoisis, medecin à Paris (Paris, Jacques du Puys: 1569) epistle.

³ Ibid. '[...] nous entrames en propos, & discourusmes long temps des enchantements & sorcelleries, qui sont matieres, lesquelles certainment ont esté par cy devant bien peu cognuës, encores que le bruit en ayt esté grand entre le vulgaire non seulement, mais aussi entre ceux qui ont pensé estre au rang des doctes & mieux appris'.

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and publishing on the subject of demons and witchcraft.⁴ But as Grévin's comments suggest, there was as yet no consensus on these topics. In this era, university-trained physicians were still primarily scholars rather than practitioners, and as such participated in these discussions about witchcraft and magic, particularly in relation to illness. So it is not surprising that the future King Henri III had consulted with his physician on the question of sorcery and that Milet had raised the issue with Grévin.

Living in an era when the existence of the devil and demons was generally assumed, and the close interactions between heaven and earth were taken for granted, sixteenth-century physicians operated within complex conceptual parameters. Bodies were seen as susceptible not only to natural causes, but also to the influence of the stars and the potential interference of non-material beings such as demons or angels. Furthermore, in this context, discussions about the senses were central, since they were the liminal points between the individual human body and the environment. Early-modern medical texts contain much that is mundane and repetitive, but they also contain discussions where their authors try to delimit the boundaries between the natural, preternatural, and supernatural realms as they pertain to issues of illness and disease. An example that illustrates how physicians were involved in this debate is found in the *Deux livres* des venins (Two Books on Poisons) of Jacques Grévin. In the midst of what is otherwise a conventional medical treatise on poisonous substances, Grévin remarks that, in order to keep his readers happy, he will address the issue of sorcery.⁵ This is not entirely unexpected, for there had always been a close relationship between the concept of poisons and spells in Western thought. In ancient Greece and Rome, poisoning could refer to either the use of natural substances or magic.⁶ The term veneficium literally meant poisoning but was more generally applied to sorcerers. So it

⁴ Jonathan Pearl places the origins of French demonological writings in the 1560s. Pearl J., *Crime of Crimes: Demonology and Politics in France* 1560–1620 (Waterloo: 1999) 26–27, 151. On early modern demonology, see especially: Clark S., *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: 1997) and Stephens W., *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago – London: 2002).

⁵ Grévin Jacques, Deux livres des venins, ausquels il est amplement discouru des bestes venimeuses, theriaques, poisons & contrepoisons, ensemble, les oeuvres de Nicandre, medecin & poëte Grec traduictes en vers françois (Antwerp, Christopher Plantin: 1568) 9.

⁶ In the *Laws*, Plato identified two types of poisoners: those who use natural means and those who use magic. Plato, "Laws", in Hamilton E. – Cairns H. (eds.), *The Collected Dialogues*, Bollingen Series LXXI (New York: 1961) 1483.

⁷ Bailey M.D., *Magic and Superstition in Europe: A Concise History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: 2007) 18. The Protestant theologian Lambert Daneau remarked upon

is not surprising that this association would continue to be made in the era of the witch-hunts.⁸ Grévin's discussion of sorcery becomes an opportunity to probe the relationship between magic, poison, and the senses in the early modern period. On the one hand, Grévin attempts to undercut 'superstitious' beliefs by attributing the supposed effects of bewitchment and spells to natural causes, based on his view of how the senses function naturally. However, his understanding of the natural functioning of the senses – particularly the sense of sight – is situated in a premodern framework. Moreover, his analysis of the issue is neither consistent nor unambiguous. What is more straightforward is that it was derived from a Protestant perspective, which placed ultimate faith in God to overcome nefarious forces in the heavens, and along the way manages to critique the use of Catholic practices in magic rituals. His analysis reveals the complexities at the heart of early modern views of sense perception, and in particular the sense of sight.

Grévin's work is less well-known than that of his Dutch contemporary, Johan Wier, physician to the duke of Cleves and author of *The Illusions of Demons*. This controversial work, which appeared in 1563, provided the first systematic medical response to the claims of witch hunters that female witches were working with the devil to cause harm to society. Wier attempted to defend accused witches by arguing that they were not evil-doers but foolish old women deluded by the devil into making absurd and false confessions. Such an argument went against the spirit of the day; the book was placed on the Index of Prohibited Books in 1570 and elicited a number of rebuttals, the most famous of which was Jean Bodin's *Démonomanie*. Nevertheless, Wier's *Illusions of Demons* would go through six Latin editions and several translations (including Grévin's translation into French) before the end of the century, suggesting that it found a receptive audience. Wier's perspective is complex and cannot

the etymological similarity; he added that the issue is even more confusing since the devil can teach witches how to use poisons: Daneau Lambert, *Deux traitez nouveaux, tres-utiles pour ce temps* ([Geneva], Jaques Baumet: 1579) 23–24.

⁸ Johan Wier refers to 'witches and poisoners' as one category of persons and distinguishes them from magicians. Weyer Johann, *Witches, Devils and Doctors in the Renaissance: Johann Weyer*, De praestigiis daemonum [6th ed., 1583], Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies (Binghamton: 1991) 98. I am using the original Dutch spelling of his name; the German variant, Johann Weyer, is also commonly found in secondary literature written in English.

⁹ Bodin Jean, *La Démonomanie des sorciers* [...] (Paris, Jacques Du Puys: 1580).

¹⁰ "Introduction", Weyer, Witches, Devils and Doctors lxix.

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be examined in detail here.¹¹ However, one point is worth noting in passing: in *The Illusions of Demons*, Wier provided a rationale for physicians' participation in a debate that had previously been the domain of theologians, lawyers, and witch hunters. He argued that since a physician is 'by profession an investigator of hidden things' he had both a right to express an opinion on witchcraft beliefs and a responsibility to engage with the legal issues involved in the witch trials.¹²

Wier's characterization of the nature and direction of sixteenthcentury medical research is revealing. A decade earlier, Jean Fernel, the most highly respected physician of his generation, had published De abditis rerum causis (On the Hidden Causes of Things), which probed the nature of disease, including those illnesses that 'transcend nature'. 13 As inheritors of the Hippocratic/Galenic tradition, sixteenth-century physicians were trained to look for natural causes where they could.¹⁴ However, in the early modern era, it became commonplace for physicians to admit their limited ability to do so. Many practitioners acknowledged that while the symptoms of diseases were apparent, their causes were hidden, or – to use their terminology – occult. Such acknowledgements were just one part of a larger intellectual project at this time. In fact, a parallel controversy was developing around the issue of natural magic, which involved the study of the hidden mechanisms behind various natural phenomena. 15 In the field of medicine, difficulties arose due to a weakness in Greek medical theory, the lack of a clear explanation for the spread of contagion beyond

¹¹ Wier's understanding of the devil, witchcraft and women has been reinterpreted over recent decades. Earlier views, such as that of Gregory Zilboorg, who saw Wier as a rationalist and sceptic, have been overturned. See Zilboorg G., *The Medical Man and the Witch during the Renaissance* (Baltimore: 1935) and revisions of Zilboorg's views in Baxter C., "Johann Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum:* Unsystematic Psychopathology", in Anglo S. (ed.), *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (London – Boston: 1977) 52–75; Vandermeersch P., "The Victory of Psychiatry over Demonology: The Origin of the Nineteenth-Century Myth", *History of Psychiatry* 2 (1991) 351–363; and Slattery E., "To Prevent a 'Shipwreck of Souls': Johann Weyer and 'De Praestigiis Daemonum'", *Essays in History* 36 (1994) 73–88.

¹² Weyer, Witches, Devils and Doctors 479.

¹³ Fernel Jean, On the Hidden Causes of Things: Forms, Souls and Occult Diseases in Renaissance Medicine, trans. J.M. Forrester (Leiden – Boston: 2005) 647–673.

¹⁴ This principle was established in the Hippocratic treatise, *On the Sacred Disease*. The works of both the Hippocratic authors and of Galen received increasing attention in the Renaissance. See Nutton V., "Wittenberg Anatomy", in Grell O.P. – Cunningham A. (eds.), *Medicine and the Reformation* (London: 1993) 21.

 $^{^{15}}$ It was assumed in this period that what was invisible was also non-material. Natural magicians, such as Giovanni Battista Della Porta, were beginning to question this assumption.

that of the miasma or 'bad air'. With the arrival of syphilis and continued appearance of plague, early modern physicians sought more complex ways to conceptualize contagion. Renaissance Neoplatonism provided some assistance with the concept of subtlety, which began as a way to talk about natural, yet invisible and unknowable actions. Ficino contributed to this conversation and Paracelsus would take these ideas farthest, with his emphasis on magnetic attraction and sympathetic actions. There were other streams of thought as well – the Italian physician Girolamo Fracastoro speculated that there might be 'seeds' of disease that could enter a human body and cause putrefaction. However, it was medical Neoplatonism, as it has been labeled by Roger French, which would inform the work of influential physicians like Girolamo Cardano, Jean Fernel, and lesser-known practitioners such as Jacques Grévin. It would be through this stream that the way would be paved for examining the relationship between witchcraft and the senses.

Most of the scholarly attention paid to Grévin – which is by no means extensive – has been from scholars of French literature rather than historians of early modern medicine. This reflects the fact that Jacques Grévin received acclaim in his day primarily as a playwright and poet. It was not unusual for a sixteenth-century physician to have literary interests, for there was no such thing as a narrow specialist in the Renaissance, not even in medicine. Even so, Grévin revealed remarkable aptitude in both

¹⁶ French R., Medicine before Science: The Business of Medicine from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment (Cambridge: 2003) 159.

¹⁷ Schott H., "Paracelsus and Van Helmont on Imagination: Magnetism and Medicine before Mesmer", in Scholz Williams G. – Gunnoe C. (eds.), *Paracelsian Moments: Science, Medicine and Astrology in Early Modern Europe* (Kirksville, MO: 2002) 135–147.

¹⁸ Fracastoro Girolamo, *Les trois livres de Jérome Fracastor sur la contagion, les maladies contagieuses et leur traitement*, trans. L. Meunier (Paris: 1893) xxii–xxiii.

¹⁹ French, *Medicine before Science* 158–161. For example, in his *Pathologie*, Fernel explains that food, medicines and poisons affect the health of our body because their subtle actions penetrate the humours. Fernel Jacques, *La Pathologie*, trans. A.D.M. (Paris, Iean Guignard: 1650) 50.

²⁰ A biography was written in 1899 by Lucien Pinvert, but since then only a few scattered articles have appeared. Pinvert L., *Jacques Grévin: Etude biographique et littéraire* (Paris: 1899); Weinberg B., "The Sources of Grévin's Ideas on Comedy and Tragedy", *Modern Philology* 45 (1947) 46–53; Aldington R., *French Studies and Reviews* (Freeport, NY: 1967) 92–100; Evans K.J., "Jacques Grevin's Religious Attitude and the 'Family of Love'", *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 47 (1985) 357–365; Caldari F.B. (ed.), *Jacques Grévin by Guillaume Colletet* (Fasano: 1988); Caron E., "Des *Esbahis* la sottie aux *Esbahis* la comédie: La formation et l'usurpation d'un théâtre national populaire", *The French Review* 65 (1992) 719–732.

arenas. By the age of twenty he had written several well-received plays.²¹ As a poet he was a follower of the Pléiade, although his Protestant religious leanings distanced him from that group's principal figure, Pierre de Ronsard.²² Grévin published a book of his poetry in 1560 and a collected edition of his plays in 1561, the same year he graduated with a degree in medicine.²³ Then, during the years between 1565 and 1569, he produced a number of important medical works. His *Livres des venins* was started in 1564 and published in 1568.²⁴ His translation of Wier's *Illusions of Demons* appeared in 1567, followed by a French edition of Andreas Vesalius's anatomical work in 1569.²⁵ He was not afraid to embrace controversial views in religion, literature, or medicine. During this period, he also contributed to debates over the Paracelsian chemical medicines by entering into a war of words with Louis de Launay, a physician who advocated the use of antimony.²⁶ Grévin argued that rather than being a beneficial medication, antimony was a poisonous substance that destroyed both flesh and humours, and since it had no taste or odour, it could easily be used to poison someone's food or drink.²⁷ His argument persuaded the Faculty of Medicine and the Parliament of Paris to declare it an illegal substance. Nor did he avoid religious controversy. He is generally assumed to have been a Calvinist, although one historian has speculated that he may have

²¹ César, a tragedy and Les Ebahis, a comedy. Pinvert, Jacques Grévin 26.

²² Eloy N.F.J., *Dictionnaire historique de la médecine ancienne et moderne*, 4 vols. (Mons, H. Hoyois: 1778), vol. II, 385–386.

²³ Grévin Jacques, L'Olimpe de Jaques Grevin de Cler-mont en Beauvais, ensemble les autres oeuvres poëtiques dudict auteur (Paris, Robert Estienne: 1560); Grévin Jacques, Le Theatre de Jacques Grevin de Cler-mont en Beauvaisis [...] (Paris, Vincent Sertenas: 1561); see Aldington R., French Studies and Reviews 95.

²⁴ Pinvert, Jacques Grévin 91.

²⁵ Grévin Jacques, *Les Portraits anatomiques de toutes les parties du corps humain* [...] *Ensemble l'Abbregé d'André Vesal, et l'explication d'iceux* [...] (Paris, André Wechel: 1569). Pinvert provides a bibliography of his works in *Jacques Grévin* 2–11.

De Launay Louis, De la Faculté et vertu admirable de l'antimoine, avec responce à certaines calomnies (La Rochelle, B. Berton: 1564). Grévin replied with Discours de Jaques Grevin de Cler-mont en Beauvaisis [...] sur les vertus et facultez de l'antimoine. Contre ce qu'en a escrit maistre Loys de Launay, medecin de La Rochelle (Paris, André Wechel: 1566). De Launay responded with his Responce au discours de maistre Jacques Grévin [...] qu'il a escript contre le livre de maistre Loys de L'Auna [...] touchant la faculté de l'antimoine (La Rochelle, B. Berton: 1566). In turn, Grévin replied with Le second discours de Jacques Grévin, docteur en medicine à Paris, sur les vertues et facultez de l'antimoine [...] pour server d'apologie contre ce qu'a escrit M. Loïs de Launay, empirique (Paris, Jacques du Puys: n.d. [1567]).

²⁷ Grévin's second discourse on antimony was included in the 1568 edition of his *Deux livres des venins*. Grévin, *Deux livres* 309.

been affiliated with the Family of Love.²⁸ We do know that he rejected the violence and dogmatism that characterized the religious wars.²⁹ His early death at the age of 32, in 1570, spared him from witnessing the war's worst atrocities.³⁰ His health had always been fragile – he himself said that he was susceptible to fevers – and he died of unknown causes after years of work, travel, and exertion. At the time of his death he was in the service of Marguerite de France, duchess of Savoy, and left behind a wife and daughter whom the duchess continued to support.³¹ Certainly his acclaim would have grown had he lived longer; he was well-established in both medical and literary spheres by the time of his death. Grévin's treatise on poisons was well-received in France and he would be cited as an authority on the topic for years.³² A German physician, Jeremy Martius, decided to make a Latin translation of the original French text. This project was warmly received by Grévin's publisher, Christopher Plantin, who published the Latin version in 1571, a year after Grévin's death.

In the *Deux livres des venins*, Grévin begins with a general summary of Galenic medicine and physiology, and then moves to the more specific topic of poisons. He states that philosophers study poisons to understand the hidden nature of things, whereas poisoners study them for the practical purpose of causing harm. He situates the physician between these two groups, as someone who wants to study poisons to better grasp the workings of nature, but also to know the effects of poison on the human body in order to treat them. He feels the need to add his view that physicians ought to be loved as much as poisoners are hated.³³ He then examines a wide range of poisonous plants and animals, and the use of various antidotes such as theriac.³⁴ Medically, the idea of poison was a broad concept at this time; it could refer to the ingestion by an individual of a harmful substance, but could also explain how diseases spread in a more general sense, that is, by a poison that infected the air.³⁵ Some physicians argued

²⁸ Evans, "Jacques Grévin's Religious Attitude" 357–365.

²⁹ Ibid. 360.

³⁰ Pinvert, Jacques Grévin 78.

³¹ Eloy, *Dictionnaire*, vol. II, 385–386.

³² Pinvert, *Jacques Grévin* 116–117.

³³ Grévin, Deux livres 7.

³⁴ Theriac had been a popular cure-all since ancient times. Its recipe was lengthy and complex and required some expertise to prepare.

³⁵ This usage is common in sixteenth-century medical texts. A typical example can be found in Suau Jean, *Traictez contenans la pure et vraye doctrine de la peste & de la coqueluche, les impostures spagyrique, & plusieurs abus de la medecine, chirurgie, & pharmacie* [...] (Paris, Didier Millot: 1586) 147.

that all illnesses were caused by poison, an idea that Grévin dismissed.³⁶ He argued that poisons operate primarily through ingestion, but that their subtle actions could affect all three types of substances in the human body: that is, that which is solid, fluid, and vapourous.³⁷

To understand Grévin's analysis, it is necessary to situate it within Galenic physiology of the humours, spirits, and senses. The term spiritual in Western medicine referred to the *pneumata*, which were thought to be vapourous substances that flowed through the veins, arteries, and nerves. There were three types of these vapours, or spirits: vital spirits (which governed bodily heat and basic functions), animal spirits (related to sensation), and psychic spirits (related to consciousness).³⁸ The Galenic view of the body was holistic; the humours and pneumata influenced not only one's physical health, but one's mental state as well. They also informed Galen's theory of vision, which proposed that the pneumata present in the brain extended their activity into the optic nerve and out into space toward the object being observed.³⁹ Vision was possible because the pneuma activated the air in front of the eye, in the same way that sunlight illuminates objects.⁴⁰ It was for this reason, it was argued, that the eyes seem to glisten. There were some scholars who drew on Arabic sources and suggested that vision worked by reception rather than emission, but the question had not vet been settled. As late as 1597, in one of the earliest books devoted to optometry, French physician André Du Laurens included a lengthy analysis of the problem and concluded that no one had vet figured out how vision operates.⁴¹

If the eyes did emit visual spirits, it was reasonable to infer that they would do so when activated by the passions. In fact, Galen's theory directly linked the physiology of the eye to the imagination and to the passions. On this basis, it would be easy to believe that when the emotions were strongly agitated, for example, by love or envy, the pneuma

³⁶ Grévin, Deux livres 17–18.

³⁷ Ibid. 6

³⁸ In Galen's view, vital spirits originated in the heart, animal spirits in the liver, and psychic spirits in the brain.

³⁹ Siegel R., *Galen on Sense Perception* (New York: 1970) 65, 72 and 124. The notion that the eyes gave off visual rays had even earlier origins, in the views of Empedocles. Park D., *The Fire within the Eye: A Historical Essay on the Nature and Meaning of Light* (Princeton, NJ: 1997) 35.

⁴⁰ Lindberg D.C., Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler (Chicago: 1976) 9–11. Galen, On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body, trans. M.T. May (Ithaca, NY: 1968), vol. I, 398.

⁴¹ Du Laurens André, *Discours de la conservation de la veue, des maladies melancholiques, des catarrhes, & de la vieillesse* (Paris, Iamet Mettayer: 1597) 58.

was directed outward through the eye and could create disturbances in the environment.⁴² Furthermore, it was also logical to assume that poisons could infiltrate various types of pneumata, including those that made possible the sense of sight. As belief in and fear of witches increased in the general population over the course of the sixteenth century, the question of fascination, or bewitchment through the eves, began to receive medical attention. It was commonly thought that a woman could bewitch a man with her eyes to make him fall in love, or that the evil glance of an old woman could cause illness in children. Among physicians and scholars, such a belief was not irrational, given the ambiguity around the nature and workings of visual perception.⁴³ The issue was not whether it occurred, but whether it was a natural phenomenon or one that could be manipulated by witches in league with the devil for harmful purposes. In 1530, Antonio de Cartagena wrote: 'It is possible [...] that a person whose humours are corrupt emits vapour from his or her eyes and infects the air, and that the air affects children, who are not able to resist it very well because of their exceptional delicacy [...]'.44 Cartagena argued that this occurs most often in older women because, while voung women expel poisonous vapours through their menstrual periods, older women do not and the poisons accumulate in their bodies. 45 Jean Fernel's view was somewhat more cautious; he acknowledged 'that nature has generated poisons in the whole body of certain persons, and in the eyes of others [...]', but adds that these are unusual occurrences which are 'virtually miraculous'. 46 Johan Wier argued that '[...] it is well known that there is no other organ in the fabric of the human body which is filled with such an abundance of humors and spirits as the pupil of the eye, and no organ from which the gleam of those spirits flashes forth to such an extent [...] as from the

⁴² Mary Wack outlines the development of this theory in the late Middle Ages in Wack M., "From Mental Faculties to Magical Philters: The Entry of Magic into Academic Medical Writings on Lovesickness, 13th–17th Centuries", in Beecher D. – Ciavolella M. (eds.), *Eros and Anteros: The Medical Traditions of Love in the Renaissance* (Ottawa: 1992) 9–32.

 $^{^{43}}$ As Stuart Clark demonstrates in *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: 2007), issues around sense perception in general and vision in particular were central to early modern debates.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Maxwell-Stuart P.G., *Witch Hunters: Professional Prickers, Unwitchers & Witch Finders of the Renaissance* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: 2003) 71. Antonio de Cartagena was a Spanish physician who became acquainted with the French royal princes Francis and Charles while their father, King Francis I, was being held hostage by Charles V in Spain. Eloy, *Dictionnaire*, vol. I, 551.

⁴⁵ Maxwell-Stuart, Witch Hunters 71.

⁴⁶ Fernel, On the Hidden Causes of Things 651.

pupil'.⁴⁷ However, for Wier, as for Cartagena, the critical issue was that these are innate qualities and not something that could be turned on by one's will. Therefore, to accuse a witch of deliberately causing harm by bewitching someone through her eyes is a misguided charge.

The lines of debate were clearly delineated by the French demonologist Pierre De Lancre in his 1612 book entitled *Incredulity and Disbelief in Sorcery*. ⁴⁸ Here he deals at length with the topic of fascination, that is, the notion that a witch could cause harm or illness with her eyes. In the context of this discussion, De Lancre takes issue with the Italian physician Girolamo Cardano. The disagreement was not over whether fascination really occurred, but whether it was due to natural or supernatural causes. ⁴⁹ In the context of this debate, De Lancre addresses the question of how vision operates, that is, whether sight works by reception, with the eyes taking in light, or emission, with the eyes sending off light. He specifically rejects the theory of emission in order to prove his main point, which is that fascination is not a natural function of the eyes, as Cardano believed, but that it is the work of the devil through his agents, the witches. ⁵⁰ The question of whether the eyes could cause illness would remain a lively one into the early-seventeenth century.

The other question involving the use of the eyes to bewitch or fascinate revolved around the concept of lovesickness, which was understood as a physical reaction by a man to the enchantment generated by the eyes of a woman. The idea of lovesickness resonated with scholars of a Neoplatonist inclination, for whom the eyes were the windows on the souls and who defined love as the admiration of beauty. The physician Jacques Ferrand would devote an entire book to lovesickness in 1610.⁵¹ Italian physician Giovanni Battista Della Porta argued that when two people were in love, visual spirits flew from the eyes of one into those of the other and from there entered the heart, where the image of the beloved would be reconstructed.⁵² In the case of unrequited love, this image would not

⁴⁷ Weyer, Witches, Devils and Doctors 266.

⁴⁸ De Lancre Pierre, L'Incredulité et mescreance du sortilege plainement convaincue ou il est amplement et curieusement traicté, de la verité ou illusion du sortilege, de la fascination [...] et d'une infinite d'autres rares & nouveaux subjects (Paris, Nicolas Buon: 1622).

⁴⁹ Ibid. 72.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 94.

 $^{^{51}}$ Ferrand Jacques, *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, ed. and trans. D. Beecher – M. Ciavolella (Syracuse, NY: 1990) 22–23. Ferrand wrote the first edition in 1610, with a much expanded edition to follow in 1623.

 $^{^{52}\,}$ Bolzoni L., "The Art of Memory and the Erotic Image in 16th and 17th Century Europe: The Example of Giovan Battista Della Porta", in *Eros and Anteros* 114.

be nourished by a constant stream of visual spirits, and would bring the unfortunate individual 'to madness and death'.⁵³ Again, this was seen as a natural effect resulting from the movements of the pneumata that emerged from the eyes. Because the physical effects of being in love were so apparent (heart palpitations, sweaty palms, sleeplessness, loss of appetite), it made sense that lovesickness was a real ailment with physical causes.

For his part, Jacques Grévin commented on both topics in his Two Books of Poisons. First, with respect to lovesickness, he had not only a professional opinion, but personal experience to draw upon. At the age of twenty-one, he had fallen in love with Nicole Estienne, daughter of the physician Charles Estienne, and granddaughter of the printer Henri Estienne.⁵⁴ They didn't marry, for reasons unknown, though religion may have played a role. 55 Grévin's 1560 poem *Olimpe* is a testament to his love for Nicole. It is laced with references to the physical effects of love on the human body.⁵⁶ In it, he says that 'I felt the first stirrings of love; / I felt its poison in the warmest season [...] by the tenth of March I felt myself astonished [...] / I perceived that thus I had been poisoned'. ⁵⁷ In a particularly revealing stanza he writes: 'If lovesickness could be healed through the art of medicine or necromancy / I would have long ago, to have deliverance, / taken the antidote against it'.58 While this may be read metaphorically of course, even in his poetry he was considering the relationship between the senses and poison. Such sentiments may have still been in his mind when writing his Deux livres des venins four years later, where he also accepts the legitimacy of lovesickness as a natural phenomenon. In his analysis he cites 'the learned and admirable' Ficino, who wrote that the blood of a young person is so subtle, clear, warm, and sweet, that it produces visual rays of the same quality, which easily flow out of his eyes toward the one who is being admired. And they can then

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Pinvert, Jacques Grévin 28.

⁵⁵ Nicole would marry Jacques Liébault, regent of the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, in 1561. See Robin D. et al., *Encyclopedia of Women in the Renaissance* (Santa Barbara, CA: 2007) 133.

⁵⁶ "Olimpe", in Grévin Jacques, *Théâtre complet et poésies choisies*, ed. L. Pinvert (Paris: 1922) 252, 259, 281.

^{57′} Ibid. 264: 'Je senty de l'Amour la première secousse; / Je senty son venin en la saison plus douce. / [...] Le dixième de Mars, me sentant estonné / [...] J'apperceu que dès lors j'estois empoisonné'.

⁵⁸ Ibid. ²80: 'Hé! si le mal d'aimer recevoit guarison / Par art de médecine ou par la nécromance, / Il y a jà long temps, pour avoir deliverance, / Que j'eusse contre luy pris un contrepoison'.

mix with the bodily humours and excite the passions of the other.⁵⁹ As additional evidence, Grévin cites the poet Petrarch's description of Laura's effect on him.⁶⁰ What is particularly noteworthy is that Grévin then adds that this effect is also seen in someone who has an eye affliction and communicates it to someone who looks at him. So for Grévin love transmitted through the eyes operated through the same natural mechanism as that which caused a contagious eye disease (what we would call conjunctivitis) to be spread from one person to the next.

On the other hand, his view of witchcraft and the belief that the eves could emit poisonous vapours reveals a more sceptical stance. Grévin initiates his discussion by defining sorcery as a form of magic which combines words, ceremonies, and drugs.⁶¹ His point of entry into the subject is the question of the basilisk. Numerous early-modern medical texts refer to Pliny's account of the basilisk, a legendary snake that was said to poison its prey merely by looking at it.⁶² For Grévin, the key question is whether the basilisk actually poisons the man with his eyes, or rather, whether there is some other form of contact going on at the same time. Certainly the touching of one body against another can transmit a poison from one to the other, but could the eyes do so? Here Grévin is rather cautious. He states that lovesickness makes sense to him, but that, on the other hand, the claim that a witch can make a man sick merely by looking at him has little basis in reality.63 He did believe that an old woman's breath could lead to illness.⁶⁴ He notes that it often happens that little children succumb to a malady which comes from the breath of an old woman; her poisonous breath wastes their delicate lungs, which are offended by the smell, and they are then mistakenly thought to have been bewitched.⁶⁵ Grévin concludes that sometimes sorcerers can cause animals to die, but not simply by a look or a word. It is more reasonable to think that there is some sort

⁵⁹ Grévin, *Deux livres* 37.

 $^{^{60}\,}$ In one of his sonnets, Petrarch said that by looking into Laura's eyes 'il gaigna le mal qu'elle y avoit, & fut gaigné, comme si le mal eust changé de place'. Ibid. 38.

⁶¹ Ibid. 31.

⁶² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, VIII, chap. 33. It is referred to in numerous early modern texts. For an example, see Guyon Louis, *Les diverses leçons de Loys Guyon* [...] (Lyon, Claude Morillon: 1610) 836.

⁶³ Grévin, Deux livres 38-39.

⁶⁴ On this topic, Grévin again cites Ficino as an authority. Ibid. 39-40.

⁶⁵ Wier made the same point: 'Meanwhile, I do not deny that by their fetid breath old women can sometimes infect those of tender years whom they handle. Anyone else could easily do the same – if poisonous decay breathes from that person's mouth with such foulness and mingles with and infects the delicate breath of the young'. Weyer, *Witches, Devils and Doctors* 265–266.

of poison transmitted through the breath. As for the poisonous eyes of the basilisk, Grévin argues that if someone is poisoned in the presence of a basilisk it must be due to the bad smell which emanates from the basilisk's body and is pulled into another's body when they inhale.⁶⁶ For real infection to occur, in his view, some sort of touch had to be involved.

Grévin's working principle is that poison is communicated through a natural medium. He notes that the issue becomes confused in the minds of the common people because they cannot distinguish the effective from the ineffective elements of a charm or spell. He notes that most enchantments include poisons mixed with words, objects, images, characters, lights, sounds, invocations, and all the superstitions in which the simple people have faith.⁶⁷ To argue his point, Grévin simplifies this to two elements: medications or poisons (by which he means anything taken into the body) and words (by which he means all extraneous ceremonies and rituals). He then examines whether it is possible for a sorcerer to poison someone by words combined with drugs, or by simple words, or by fascination. He cites the standard ancient sources, including Virgil, Ovid, and Pliny, to show that sorcerers use drugs and adds that there is no doubt that people can be poisoned through their use, as Nicander and Dioscorides attest.⁶⁸ He acknowledges that passions, apparitions, and imaginations can be introduced into people's brains by the use of incense and fumigations, unguents, and drinks. However, the effects of these substances are not connected to any words or ceremonies performed at the same time, which are merely incidental to those things which actually affect the body.⁶⁹ Therefore, to say that people can be affected by the power of words is false; he asks, what kind of malice could words contain that could damage the spirits, humours, or solid parts of one's body?⁷⁰ He acknowledges that witches can sometimes cause illnesses in livestock, but it is not done, as many think, through a look or a word. Rather, they are probably using some sort of poisonous substance to cause the desired effect.⁷¹ Things have to touch one another in some way in order to have a real effect.72

⁶⁶ Grévin, Deux livres 30-31.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 30-31.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 31. Nicander and Dioscorides were the principal Greek authorities on drugs, poisons and antidotes.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 36-37.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 33.

⁷¹ Ibid. 39.

⁷² Ibid. 39-40.

Interestingly, but not surprisingly given his religious convictions, he embeds in this discussion a diatribe against all forms of magic, including those that draw on Catholic rituals. He notes that those who use holy water or other holy objects for magical purposes are simply adapting pagan rituals and using them to deceive people. In his view, magic cannot be attributed to benign forces, even if the saints or Virgin Mary have been invoked to perform it. If such ceremonies have an effect, it is because it is done through evil spirits in order to accommodate themselves to human understanding and to establish their tyranny under the name of religion.⁷³ Grévin, like many physicians of his day, was sceptical of popular magic. On the other hand, he believed that natural magic, which sought to explore the hidden causes underlying natural effects, was a legitimate part of natural philosophy.⁷⁴ Even in an area where he possessed strong views, for example on the dangers of antimony, he acknowledged that the alchemists possess some beautiful secrets and they ought to be consulted on such matters as the true properties of metals.⁷⁵

Like virtually everyone of his era, Grévin retained some space for the role of demons. He invokes the reality of demonic activity when discussing cases of witchcraft performed at a distance, where there is no possibility of direct contact. He deals at some length with ancient and contemporary examples of people being harmed through the use of effigies. He also refers to 'a book written in Latin about sixty or eighty years ago against witches, called the *Hammer of Witches*'. Grévin does not question the veracity of any of these accounts, but merely concludes that such sorcery must be due to demons, but not with the assistance of witches, since, as he has already shown, the spells and incantations they are accused of using are ineffective. He articulates what was a typical Protestant response to the demonologists, that if sorcery is caused by evil spirits, it can only be cured by the power of God, to whom, given this eventuality, one must look for help.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid. 35-36.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 34.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 322.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 40: 'Lon en pourra voir encore davantage en plusieurs traictés, tant des anciens, que des modernes, & principalement en un livre qui fut faict en Latin, il y a environ soixante ou quatre vingts ans, contre les sorcieres; & se nomme La millet des sorcieres'.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 9: 'Pour autant que tout ainsi comme il est faict par l'ouvrage des esprits malings, aussi ie croy que la guerison depend seulement de la plaine puissance de celuy qui leur est contraire en tout & par tout, c'est à dire, de Dieu, duquel en tel inconvenient nous devons demander & attendre le secours: nous gardans bien toutesfois de nous laisser abuser en cecy car les ignorans rapportent les maladies, dont ils ne sçavent les causes, aux

So we see with Grévin a certain amount of ambiguity regarding the senses and their role in the transmission of poisons leading to illness. He accepts the validity of lovesickness being transmitted through the eyes as something that occurs naturally, but does not go so far as to suggest that a witch can cause illness through an evil glance. Given his understanding of how poisons work, something must normally touch another to transmit illness. In his view, a word or glance alone is not sufficient. Grévin's analysis, and his efforts to discern what elements had real effects in the natural world would prefigure those undertaken by several generations of physicians after him.⁷⁸ On the other hand, Grévin still believed that demons could cause illness in some instances. Finally, he was also willing to acknowledge the limits of his understanding and that of his contemporaries. He stated: 'I well know that there are many hidden things of which we have no knowledge. I would even say that if all of the known things were balanced against the unknown ones, they would turn out to be marvelously light'.79

Sixteenth-century medicine has sometimes been characterized (especially by earlier generations of historians of medicine) as backward, misguided, and hopelessly intertwined with magical thinking. What needs to be recognized is that the foundations of early modern medicine, with its roots in Galenism and in many cases supported by Neoplatonic philosophy, did not preclude early modern physicians from pondering the issues of contagion and poison. Their assumptions would be discarded by modern practitioners, but what is worth noting is that within the context in which they worked, they were able to develop a coherent critique of some of the most egregious accusations leveled against accused witches. In fact, it was the ambiguity surrounding the way vision operated that gave them a way to undermine beliefs in sorcery and caution against the ready acceptance of witchcraft accusations. It would only be with the work of Johannes Kepler that a modern understanding of vision based on reception would later emerge. A century later, the parameters of the debate

demons, sorciers & sorcieres. Avant donques que d'en iuger, il faudra s'enquerir diligemment aux bons & doctes medecins'.

 $^{^{78}}$ A useful article that examines how these and related issues were discussed in the seventeenth century is that of Baldwin M.R., "Toads and Plague: Amulet Therapy in Seventeenth-Century Medicine", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 67 (1993) 227–247.

⁷⁹ Grévin, *Deux livres* 292: '[...] car ainsi ie le pense, & sçay bien qu'il y a beaucoup de choses cachees, desquelles nous n'avons pas la cognoissance: mesme ie dis que si toutes les choses cognues estoyent balanchees avecques les incognues, elles se trouveroyent merveilleusement legeres'.

around sorcery, the senses, and disease would be entirely different. The argument is often made that it was in the seventeenth century that European scholars worked long and hard to separate magical from scientific thinking. While not diminishing the efforts that would be made in that era, it is important to acknowledge that a century earlier the medical community was already grappling with the same critical issues. If they did not come up with all of the answers, at least they understood the questions.

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THE RETURN OF THE SPECIES: JESUIT RESPONSES TO KEPLER'S NEW THEORY OF IMAGES

Sven Dupré

In the first decade of the seventeenth century Johannes Kepler established a new theory of vision, which was based on the discovery of the inverted retinal image. With hindsight, Kepler's *Optics* (1604) is celebrated as an epoch-making book, that is, either as the culmination of a centuries-old tradition of optics (reflected in Kepler's title *Paralipomena ad Vitellionem*, which announces the book as a commentary to one of his most important predecessors, Witelo) or as the foundation of modern optics.¹ Nevertheless, the immediate reception of Kepler's *Optics* in the first two decades after its publication was less celebratory. Not all mathematicians would have agreed with Galileo, who famously considered Kepler's *Optics* too difficult to be worth much consideration.² But neither did those who did read Kepler's *Optics* consider it the last word or the beginning of something entirely new. The Jesuit mathematicians Franciscus Aguilonius and Christoph Scheiner were prominent among the 'early adopters' of Kepler's *Optics*. However, they did not wholeheartedly embrace it.

In this chapter I am concerned with the reasons behind the Jesuit reception of Kepler's theory of vision. It has its place in a book on the early modern senses and religion because I argue that those reasons have ultimately to do with the important role attributed to vision and images in Jesuit spirituality. The core of the difficulties that the Jesuit mathematicians had with Kepler's optics is situated in his new theory of vision and optical imagery. Kepler pointed out that the inverted retinal image was (in his words) a *pictura*, that is, an image, which is not a perceived image, but (and this is noted for the first time in the history of optics)

¹ Lindberg D.C., Theories of Vision: From Al-Kindi to Kepler (Chicago – London: 1976); Straker S.M., Kepler's Optics: A Study in the Development of Seventeenth Century Natural Philosophy, Ph.D. dissertation (Indiana University: 1971). See also the summary of his central argument in Straker S., "Kepler, Tycho, and the 'Optical Part of Astronomy': The Genesis of Kepler's Theory of Pinhole Images", Archive for the History of Exact Sciences 24 (1981) 267–293.

² Pedersen O., "Sagredo's Optical Researches", Centaurus 13 (1969) 139–150.

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an image formed by the refraction of light only.³ The *species*, which had played an important function in theories of vision and perception, no longer had a place in Kepler's optics. Remarkably, Aguilonius and Scheiner reintroduced the *species*. This chapter asks: why?

One possible answer is that these Jesuit mathematicians were simply not aware of Kepler's optics, or if they were, did not consider it sufficiently important to deserve a response. This has never been an issue for Scheiner, whose work has always been heralded as offering the experimental confirmation of Kepler's inverted retinal image.⁴ But only recently Isabelle Pantin has convincingly shown, by way of Aguilonius's treatment of the camera obscura, that he was equally familiar with Kepler's *Optics*.⁵ This means that Aguilonius and Scheiner consciously reintroduced the *species*; the presence of the *species* in Aguilonius and Scheiner cannot be attributed to unfamiliarity with Kepler's work and a continuation of the optical tradition. It was truly a response and reaction to Kepler.

Several historians have argued that Kepler's new theory of optical imagery threatened one central concern of Jesuit mathematicians: the foundation of mathematical knowledge.⁶ Following Christoph Clavius, responsible for the development of the mathematical curriculum at the Collegio Romano, Jesuit mathematicians in various geographical contexts, including the home countries of Aguilonius and Scheiner, argued for the

³ For Kepler's distinction between *imago* and *pictura*, see Dupré S., "Inside the Camera Obscura: Kepler's Experiment and Theory of Optical Imagery", *Early Science and Medicine* 13 (2008) 219–244; Shapiro A.E., "Images: Real and Virtual, Projected and Perceived, from Kepler to Dechales", *Early Science and Medicine* 13 (2008) 270–312; Malet A., "Keplerian Illusions: Geometrical Pictures versus Optical Images in Kepler's Visual Theory", *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 21 (1990) 1–40; Smith A.M., "Ptolemy, Alhazen, and Kepler and the Problem of Optical Images", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 8 (1998) 9–44.

⁴ Daxecker F., The Physicist and Astronomer Christoph Scheiner: Biography, Letters, Works (Innsbruck: 2004).

⁵ Pantin I., "Simulachrum, Species, Forma, Imago: What Was Transported by Light into the Camera Obscura? Divergent Conceptions of Realism Revealed by Lexical Ambiguities at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century", Early Science and Medicine 13 (2008) 245–269. Pantin corrects the accepted opinion of Ziggelaar A., François de Aguilón S.J. (1567–1617): Scientist and Architect (Rome: 1983).

⁶ For the Jesuit concerns about the status of mathematical entities, see Dear P., *Discipline and Experience: The Mathematical Way in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: 1995); Feldhay R., "Mathematical Entities in Scientific Discourse: Paulus Gulding and his *Dissertatio de Motu Terrae*", in Daston L. (ed.), *Biographies of Scientific Objects* (Chicago: 2000) 42–67.

epistemological point of view of realism.⁷ These historians maintain that Kepler's new optics created such an epistemological problem for the Jesuits that Aguilonius and Scheiner could only reintroduce the species to solve the knowability of nature through mathematics. I agree with this explanation, but I argue that this is only part of the story. Not only did the disappearance of the *species* create a problem for the attainment of natural knowledge (and the role of mathematics in this endeavour), it also caused a problem for the acquisition of spiritual knowledge, which given the hierarchies of knowledge and disciplines, was undoubtedly the more severe problem. Species, and the Aristotelian psychology of the soul in which they were embedded, were crucial elements in the Jesuit theory of spiritual exercises. Thus, Kepler's new theory of optical imagery created serious conflicts with this Jesuit theory of images formulated in reaction to the Reformation and iconoclasm. Given the hierarchy of knowledge, in which natural knowledge was clearly subordinated to spiritual knowledge, the Jesuit mathematicians were confronted with limits set from above. Kepler's new optics would only be acceptable to Jesuit mathematicians if appropriated, transformed, and made compatible with the Jesuit theory of images.

1. Spiritual Knowledge and the Jesuit Theory of Images

The Reformation drew attention to the processes of vision and the epistemic status of images. In response to iconoclasm and Protestant criticism, Catholics attempted to demarcate images from idols. In the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries the Jesuits, in particular, reaffirmed the role of the external senses, and the part played by art, images and vision, in attaining spiritual knowledge. Jeffrey Chipps Smith, Ralph Dekoninck, and Walter Melion have convincingly shown that from Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, to Jerome Nadal the Jesuits developed the consistent and coherent position that knowledge of divine reality could be attained through images. Nadal's *Adnotationes et*

⁷ Vanpaemel G.H.W., "Jesuit Science in the Spanish Netherlands", in Feingold M. (ed.), *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: 2003) 389–432; Romano A., *La contre-réforme mathématique: Constitution et diffusion d'une culture mathématique jésuite à la Renaissance* (1540–1640) (Rome: 1999).

⁸ Smith J.C., Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany (Princeton – Oxford: 2002) 29–56; Dekoninck R., Ad imaginem: Statuts, fonctions et usages de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVIIe siècle (Geneva: 2005); Melion

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Meditationes in Evangelia, which after a long and complicated publication history eventually appeared in the same city (Antwerp) and with the same printer (Plantin) as Aguilonius's Opticorum libri sex almost two decades later, considered art the tool of choice for the teaching of Christian doctrines. Contemplation of the book's images was to set its Catholic readership on the path of spiritual knowledge and personal religious growth. The treatises of Jan David (Veridicus Christianus, 1601) and Antoine Sucquet (Via vitae aeternae, 1630), also published in Antwerp, explicitly drew the analogy between image-makers (painters) and Christians. In the Afbeel-dinghe van d'eerste eeuwe der Societeyt Iesu, a translation of the Imago primi saeculi ordered by the German-Dutch Province, the Jesuits are portrayed as image-makers whose insights transform the persons in their care in the same way as skilled artisans transform raw materials.

This analogy, and the pictorial theory, was specific to the Jesuits from Nadal onwards, but it was based on the conviction that the external senses served the spiritual senses and the education of the good Christian; it also rested on a confidence in the imaging capacities of the human mind already found in Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* (1548).¹⁰ From Ignatius onward, the Jesuits accepted the use of the five external senses, and vision as the most powerful of them in particular, as a means for engaging the spiritual senses. While the senses created images for further processing by the soul and its faculties, the Jesuits were interested in nurturing these cognitive processes. They conceived of the transition from the external to the internal senses as the soul's ascent from divinely created nature to its source in God. 'Through the senses one finds the soul as it attempts union with the divine', as Jeffrey Chipps Smith has commented.¹¹

Ignatius was familiar with the work of Thomas Aquinas, who advocated the use of images to stimulate memory. More precisely, Aquinas advocated the use of sensory perception to stimulate spiritual memory, which was situated at a deeper level of understanding only interpreted by the soul. For Aquinas, one could only gain knowledge (that is, understand-

W.S., "Introduction: Meditative Images and the Psychology of the Soul", in Falkenburg R.L. – Melion W.S. – Richardson T.M. (eds.), *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout: 2007) 1–36.

⁹ Melion W.S., "The Art of Vision in Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationes et Meditationes in Evangelia*", in Homann F.A. (ed.), *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels. Volume 1: The Infancy Narratives by Jerome Nadal, S.J.* (Philadelphia: 2003) 1–96.

¹⁰ Smith, Sensuous Worship 35-40.

¹¹ Ibid. 40.

¹² Ibid. 38.

ing of the universals) through the *sensibilia*. Ignatius agreed with the primacy of sight as well as the theory of knowledge as found in Aquinas. This indicates that the intellectual framework on which the Jesuits' image theory – and their use of art to advance their educational agenda – rested was that of the Aristotelian psychology of the soul (which had equally inspired Aquinas).¹³ According to this faculty psychology, perceptible objects stimulated sensations of the five external senses; these sensations, in turn, were processed by the five internal senses (memory, imagination, fantasy, estimation, common sense) residing in the soul. It was the role of the *species* to guarantee the correspondence between the world and the faculties. They allowed for a continuous trajectory, in which sense images were processed to become intelligible *species*.

This fundamentally inductive theory of knowledge was the subject of a lively Renaissance tradition of commentaries on Aristotle's De anima. The Jesuits were a prominent voice in these debates, especially through the commentaries composed by the Jesuit college of Coimbra. But the most important commentary on *De anima*, influential far beyond the boundaries of the Catholic world, was that by the Jesuit philosopher Francisco Suárez, based on lectures delivered in the early 1570s at the University of Segovia.¹⁴ Although Suárez differed on several fundamental points from Thomistic cognitive psychology, he affirmed the role of species in his theory of knowledge acquisition. Shortly after Suárez's lectures, in 1577, Petrus Canisius published De Maria Virgine incomparabili et Dei genitrice sacrosancta libri quinque, the first Jesuit treatise on the Virgin Mary. Walter Melion has shown how this treatise depends on a rich use of image theory and the concept of species. 15 For Jesuits, the psychology of the soul and the sensible and intelligible species were thus equally important for meditation and the attainment of spiritual knowledge as they were for natural knowledge acquisition. One ambitious mathematician undermined the foundations of this epistemology.

¹³ Melion, "Meditative Images and the Psychology of the Soul" 2–3; Park K., "The Organic Soul", in Schmitt C.B. – Skinner Q. – Kessler E. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: 1988) 464–484.

¹⁴ Spruit L., *Species Intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge*, 2 vols. (Leiden – New York – Cologne: 1994), vol. I, 294–307.

¹⁵ Melion W.S., "Quae lecta Canisius offert et spectata diu': The Pictorial Images in Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* of 1577/1583", in Melion W.S. – Wandel L.P. (eds.), *Early Modern Eyes*, Intersections 13 (Leiden – Boston: 2010) 207–266.

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2. Perspectiva versus Kepler's New Theory of Vision and Optical Imagery

Kepler's new optics became a problem to Jesuit image theory developed in this spiritual context, because it was a response to the perspectivist tradition of optics. Perspectiva was a mathematical science, which supported the philosophical framework developed in Aristotle's *De anima*. It was then connected to the same issues and concepts on which the Jesuit theory of images depended. Optics was not a science of light, but of vision. In short, its fundamental aim was to understand sight, not light. The ulterior concerns of the perspectivists were even epistemological. Therefore, perspectiva is to be understood as a science of visual perception and cognition.¹⁶ The perspectivist account of vision is to be considered within this broader context of an Aristotelian theory of cognition of which the basis was established in Aristotle's De anima. Perspectivists were interested in how, in Aristotelian terms, we come to a conceptual grasp of universals from physical particulars. Since for Aristotle concepts were immanent in objective reality, cognition proceeded by induction. It was fundamentally an act of abstraction taking place in three different and subsequent stages. The first stage consisted of the establishment of physical contact between the sense organ and an external object, and the subsequent grasp of the 'proper sensibles' or the proper objects of each sense. This sensory impression is abstracted from the sensory embodiment in the second stage of perception. At the third and final stage of apperception a conceptual grasp of external particulars is obtained by abstracting the universals from their perceptible representations.

The medieval theory of *species* (meaning 'aspect', 'image', or 'likeness'), still predominant in the early seventeenth century when Kepler arrived on the scene, was crucial in this epistemological edifice, because it made it possible to conceive continuous chains of analogous entities (the *species*) between the objects of the exterior world and the innermost chambers of the brain.¹⁷ Kepler, however, considered this theory of *species* to cross an (in his eyes) impassable barrier between the domain of transparent or semi-transparent media, where light travelled according to the laws of geometry, and the dark regions where sensations were elaborated under the law of *spiritus*, which wandered among the humours. Instead, Kepler developed a new theory of optical imagery. Before Kepler, and regardless

¹⁶ Smith A.M., "Getting the Big Picture in Perspectivist Optics", *Isis* 72 (1981) 568–589.

¹⁷ Clark S., Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture (Oxford: 2007) 9–38.

of the agents of their production, images were invariably considered to be products of the faculty of imagination.¹⁸ The substance of which these images were made was not thought to be light, but all kinds of spirits. For example, in contemporary theories of demonology demons were often considered to be made of spirits, precisely the substance that was also directly affected by the imagination, one of the internal senses. Before Kepler, images were thus psychological.

In his Optics Kepler made a distinction between two types of images: imagines and picturae. Imago was the image as traditionally understood in *perspectiva* – in Kepler's own words: 'An image [imago] is the vision of some object conjoined with an error of faculties contributing to the sense of vision. Thus, the image is practically nothing in itself, and should rather be called *imagination*'. ¹⁹ In contrast, the *pictura* was a concept of Kepler's own invention. In Kepler's own work it referred, in a first instance, to the inverted retinal image. Two points about these picturae are important here. First, they were created by light only, and not made of spirits. Kepler's new theory of optical imagery depended upon a new theory of light. Kepler's theory of light expressed a deep and abiding commitment to Neoplatonic emanationism, and his views on the nature of visible light were deeply embedded in a theological metaphysics.²⁰ Kepler considered light as the offspring of sphericity, and both light and sphericity as images of the Trinity. The centre of the sphere was God; the circumference represented Christ; and the intervening space the Holy Spirit. This theological metaphysics provided Kepler with a metaphysical foundation of the rectilinear propagation of light and of the straight line along which light was propagated, the ray. According to Kepler, a ray was a geometrical line representing the motion of light. Kepler attacked the Aristotelian notion that light is a state of the potentially transparent medium. Instead, he maintained that light was an emanation from a luminous body and that it did not depend on a medium for its existence. Light, however, was incorporeal: a two-dimensional geometrical surface without matter, weight, or resistance. Kepler, then, did not claim that light could be described mathematically, but that the very nature of light was mathematical. He no

¹⁸ Dupré S., "Images in the Air: Optical Games, Magic, and Imagination", in Göttler C. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture*, Intersections 9 (Leiden – Boston: 2008) 71–92.

¹⁹ Kepler J., Optics: Paralipomena to Witelo & Optical Part of Astronomy, trans. W.H. Donahue (Santa Fe: 2000) 77.

²⁰ Lindberg D.C., "The Genesis of Kepler's Theory of Light': Light Metaphysics from Plotinus to Kepler", *Osiris* 2 (1986) 5–42.

longer assumed that luminous rays and points could be considered geometrical lines and points; he believed that they really were so. The nature of light was the first issue on which he explicitly opposed Aristotle.

Second, the *pictura* was the image important to the process of vision: the retinal image was a *pictura* and the process of the transmission of light from the external world to the retinal image fell under the geometrical laws of optics. Kepler meticulously described how the path of the light rays projected an inverted image on the eye's retina, but he had nothing to say on the path leading from the retinal image to the soul. He wrote:

How this picture is joined together with the visual spirits into the caverns of the cerebrum to the tribunal of the soul or of the visual faculty; whether the visual faculty, like a magistrate given by the soul, descending from the head-quarters of the cerebrum outside to the visual nerve itself and the retina, as to lower courts, might go forth to meet this image – this, I say, I leave to the natural philosophers (physici) to argue about. For the arsenal of the optical writers does not extend beyond this opaque wall, which in fact occurs first in the eye.²¹

Here, Kepler redefined the scope of optics and demarcated the field of expertise of opticians from that of the philosophers. This attack on Aristotle was even more damaging than the first difference of opinion on the nature of light. By his redefinition of the scope of optics Kepler took away the foundation from beneath the epistemological edifice of the perspectivist tradition of optics. However, he also failed to replace Aristotle's *De anima* with another account of how we acquire knowledge. He placed the epistemological problem that was central to both Aristotle's *De anima* and the perspectivist tradition of optics outside his own area of expertise as an optician. Since Jesuit image theory also depended on Aristotle's psychology of the soul, Kepler left the Jesuit theory of how spiritual knowledge could be attained through the meditation of images without any true foundation.

3. The Response of the Jesuit Mathematicians: Aguilonius and Scheiner

It is obvious that Kepler's new theory of vision and optical imagery could not remain without a response from the Jesuits. This response should have, and indeed did, come from the Jesuit mathematicians. Given the status of optics and mathematics on the map of knowledge around 1600

²¹ Kepler, Optics 180.

it was easy for theologians and other higher disciplines to ignore Kepler's new optics. But Jesuit mathematicians, writing within the confines and disciplinary boundaries of mathematics and optics, could not but respond to Kepler. Here I will discuss how two Jesuit authors on optics, Aguilonius and Scheiner, reacted to Kepler's optics.

Aguilonius taught mathematics in Douai, and later at the Jesuit college in Antwerp. In 1613, he published *Opticorum libri sex* with the aim of making a textbook on optics fit for the Jesuit mathematics curriculum. His book was published with the Plantin press in Antwerp, and lavishly illustrated with engravings, designed by Peter Paul Rubens, for which the work is justly famous. Aguilonius's reaction to Kepler's optics rested on a twofold strategy: first, he reaffirmed the Aristotelian theory of cognition as the framework of his optics; second, while for Kepler the camera obscura had demonstrated that there was no need for light rays to transport any *species*, Aguilonius remained attached to the *species*.

The point of reference of Aguilonius's optics is the eye. The framework of his optics is that of the Aristotelian theory of cognition. Moreover, in his book's opening lines, Aguilonius reaffirms the traditional hierarchy of sight as well as the divine object of knowledge:

All the things that are contained in Optics are considered under a triple reason, [compared] to the triple mode through which creatures come to know God. First direct [vision], that is our eye, as it turns towards the things in front of it, so it is compared to the cognition of the minds of the blessed contemplating the presence of God, as St. Paul said: face to face. The second [part] is reflection [repercussion] that is the perception of those things, whose images come back to us from mirrors, this is not unlike that cognition, that through faith we see God in the created things as in a kind of mirror or in enigmas. Thence the third, that we call infraction; this is how the species of things are transmitted through dissimilar diaphanous [media], and from them [the species] enter the eye as if deformed and fractured. Thus some of the divinatory notions of the heathens, corrupted by many errors, are affected by the light of nature only.²³

Rubens's frontispiece [Fig. 1] supports this same framework provided by Aristotle's *De anima* and inspired by its applications in the education of

²² For Aguilonius's biography, see Ziggelaar, François de Aguilón.

²³ Aguilonius Franciscus, *Opticorum libri sex* (Antwerp, Officina Plantiniana: 1613) 3, trans. in Gal O. – Chen-Morris R., "Empiricism without the Senses: How the Instrument Replaced the Eye", in Wolfe C.T. – Gal O. (eds.), *The Body as Object and Instrument of Knowledge: Embodied Empiricism in Early Modern Science* (Dordrecht et al.: 2010) 121–147, at 133–134.



Fig. 1. Peter Paul Rubens, Frontispiece to Franciscus Aguilonius, *Opticorum libri sex* (Antwerp, Officina Plantiniana: 1613). Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek (Math. 101).

Christians and the demarcations of 'heathens'.24 It gathered a variety of mostly mythological emblems suggesting vision or optical activity. The dominant female figure at top centre is Optica herself. In her right hand she holds a sceptre with a radiant eve, symbolizing divine vision, while on her left leg she balances a pyramid. This pyramid represents the visual pyramid of rays radiating from the eye at the pyramid's apex, to which Optica points with a finger of her left hand. To the right of Optica is a peacock, the emblem of Hera, with Argus's eyes - a long-standing symbol of the starry firmament - set in its tail. To her right is the Eagle of Zeus, representing the sense of sight, and an armillary sphere. On the left, Argus's head with the eyes returns in the hands of Hermes, who personifies Reason. On the right Athena carries a shield with the head of Medusa, symbolizing the victory of Reason over the senses. This frontispiece thus supports an image of optics whose ultimate aim was to understand cognition rather than the formation of the Keplerian retinal image as well as to serve the contemplation of God.

The structure of Aguilonius's *Opticorum libri sex* was derived from the framework formed by the Aristotelian theory of cognition. Book I discussed the physiology of the eye and the nature of vision in Aristotelian terms. Book II dealt with the visual ray (and the visual pyramid), the primal object of analysis in the perspectivist tradition of optics. Moreover, although he adopted the Keplerian analysis of the formation of pinhole images (and was thus beyond doubt familiar with Kepler's optics), in this book II, and against Kepler, Aguilonius confirmed explicitly that luminous rays and spiritual *species* are regarded as almost equivalent. He wrote: 'Species by their own nature are rays, or forms, which the objects pour out of themselves in order to excite the organ of vision by their virtue [...] The species of things, as if they were straight lines drawn from their first origin, fill all the space into which they are poured, in the act of their effusion. Therefore, they are most rightly called "rays".²⁵

Aguilonius considered the *species* – the idea that light carried representations of things – as essential to understanding the process of cognition.

²⁴ On this frontispiece, see Ashworth W.B., "Divine Reflections and Profane Refractions: Images of a Scientific Impasse in Seventeenth-Century Italy", in Lavin I. (ed.), *Gianlorenzo Bernini: New Aspects of his Art and Thought: A Commemorative Volume* (University Park – London: 1985) 179–208; Ashworth W.B., "Light of Reason, Light of Nature: Catholic and Protestant Metaphors of Scientific Knowledge", *Science in Context* 3 (1989) 89–107.

²⁵ Aguilonius, *Opticorum* 114, trans. and discussion in Pantin, "Simulachrum" 258.

In this process the three stages of induction were understood as functions of the physical sense organ and the material soul. This material soul was endowed with faculties – common sense, imagination, reason and memory – which collaborated to abstract the *intelligibilia* from the raw *sensibilia* specific to each sense organ. The common sense also served as a conduit for the *common sensibles* (for example, magnitude, distance, figure, movement, rest), attributes which – unlike the proper sensibles – are not immediately accessible to sense. The subjects of Aguilonius's books III and IV related to this framework. Book III was devoted to the cognition of the common sensibles and book IV to the fallacies in the cognition of these various common sensibles. In sum, for Aguilonius, no representation, no knowledge could be attained without the *species*. For Aguilonius, in clear contradiction, the camera obscura was an instrument designed to capture forms (*forma* or *species*), not an instrument with which light is manipulated.²⁶

The reaction of Scheiner to Kepler's optics was partly different. Scheiner joined the faculty of the Jesuit college of the University of Ingolstadt as Professor of Mathematics and Hebrew in 1610.²⁷ Scheiner's observations of the sunspots, made during his stay in Ingolstadt, led to the role for which he is perhaps best known, that is, as the opponent of Galileo in the sunspot controversy.²⁸ However, a few years later, in 1616, Archduke Maximilian III called him to Innsbruck. Here, in 1619, he published *Oculus hoc est: Fundamentum opticum*, which made him one of the most prominent voices in optical theory. In this book Scheiner reported the observation of a *pictura* on the retina of an excised eye of an ox and of other animals. Scheiner accepted Kepler's discovery of the inverted retinal image and he admitted that the crystalline lens functioned as a lens. Unlike Aguilonius, he does not reaffirm the philosophical framework, but rather follows Kepler in demarcating the domain of optics.²⁹

Nevertheless, the difference with Kepler was not just one of style, which, in Scheiner's case, was more experimental and less mathematical. Scheiner held to the traditional notion that vision happens through the

²⁶ Pantin, "Simulachrum" 261.

²⁷ For Scheiner's biography, see Daxecker, *The Physicist and Astronomer Christoph Scheiner*.

 $^{^{28}\,}$ Reeves E. – Van Helden A., Galileo Galilei & Christoph Scheiner on Sunspots (Chicago: 2010).

²⁹ As nicely observed in Vanagt K., *De emancipatie van het oog: V.F. Plempius'* Ophtalmographia *en de vroegmoderne medische denkbeelden over het zien*, PhD dissertation (Twente University: 2010) 126.

one principal ray: 'some [rays] are less important and secondary, whether mediated or diffracted: but one [that is] principal, primary and immediate [...] enters the organ of vision that senses the form of colours, and [...] [this is the ray] that is sensed'. 30 This is connected to Scheiner's reaffirmation of the theory of species. In his view, light alone could not project images in a camera obscura as Kepler had wanted; only the species could guarantee the reality of the projected images. He established that the images on the screen of the camera obscura are not delusions produced by the fantasy, nor are they defects of vision. The images on the screen are 'the pure visible species of the external objects'.31 Scheiner gave a different interpretation of Kepler's camera obscura experiment because of what Isabelle Pantin has called 'Scheiner's personal form of realism'. 32 I maintain that Scheiner insisted on the necessity of species not only because of the reliability of astronomical observation. He also needed to reinterpret Kepler's optics (all the while accepting his discovery of the role of the retinal image in vision) because of the role of the species in the attainment of spiritual knowledge for the Jesuits, from Ignatius to Nadal and from Canisius to David.

Scheiner's response to Kepler, then, like Aguilonius's, was not based on gratuitous conservatism. Their reintroduction of the theory of *species* was clearly related to a concern with representation and the reality of images. The legacy of Kepler's new theory of vision was, as Aguilonius and Scheiner rightly observed, an epistemological mess. It is no coincidence that among the mathematicians the Jesuits took the lead in this reaction to Kepler's new optics. I have argued that the unwanted consequences of Kepler's new optics for Jesuit image theory developed in the context of spirituality, based as it was on the Aristotelian theory of cognition, left Jesuit mathematicians like Aguilonius and Scheiner no other choice but to reintroduce the theory of *species*. If the Jesuits had accepted Kepler, without the necessary and partial reinterpretation attempted by Aguilonius and Scheiner, Jesuit spiritual exercises and meditation would have been left with no foundation.

³⁰ Scheiner Christoph, *Oculus, hoc est, Fundamentum opticum* (Innsbruck, apud Danielem Agricolam: 1619) 73, trans. and discussion in Gal O. – Chen-Morris R., "Baroque Optics and the Disappearance of the Observer: From Kepler's Optics to Descartes' Doubt", *Journal for the History of Ideas* 71 (2010) 191–217, at 206.

³¹ Scheiner, Oculus 133, trans. and discussion in Pantin, "Simulachrum" 266.

³² Pantin, "Simulachrum" 267.

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